



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

Honoring the Life of Our Founder

In August, we observe the birth (Aug. 12, 1852) and death (Aug. 14, 1890) of our beloved founder, Father Michael McGivney. In recognition of these occasions, it is an appropriate time to recall Pope Benedict XVI's words from the Mass for clergy at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, on April 19, 2008. During the homily, Pope Benedict XVI made special mention of "the remarkable accomplishment of that exemplary American priest, the Venerable Michael McGivney, whose vision and zeal led to the establishment of the Knights of Columbus."



Vincent de Paul for works of mercy, the unfatigued optimism of the associates of Ozauam — these traits, so precious in the sight of man and heaven, were clearly mirrored in the soul of that good, simple, honest priest of Connecticut. His special vocation it was — and a high and reserved vocation too — to develop Catholic manhood, to bind into one conspicuous solidarity all the elements that make for strength of character and so, indeed, to bring out that solidity of character — in other words, that Catholicity — prominently in its strength before the world.

THE PERSONALITY OF FATHER MCGIVNEY

By Rev. Joseph Gordian Daley

(Reprinted from *The Columbiad*, June 1900)

In the annals of the priesthood of New England no name deserves brighter honor than that of Father Michael Joseph McGivney. His short life of thirty-eight years, closing in the summer of 1890, was yet rich in every sacerdotal virtue — the love for souls of the true alter Christus, the childlike piety of the *Curé d' Ars*, the zeal of

Thanks to his labors, the Society of the Knights of Columbus was organized in 1882. Its purpose was to create among Catholic laymen a confraternity which, while not being a religious society in the strict sense of the word, exacted from its members certain religious qualifications, that is to say, the open profession of the Catholic faith and filial submission to the Church in all matters of doctrine, discipline and morals. The effect of the society of the Knights

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The Persistent Hope of the Founder

Father Jonathan D. Kalisch, O.P.

Director of Chaplains and Spiritual Development



"How many of us weep before the suffering of a child, before the breakup of a family, before so many people who do not find the path? The weeping of a priest... Do you weep? Or in this presbyterate have we lost all tears? Do you

weep for your people? Tell me, do you offer intercessory prayer before the Tabernacle? Do you struggle with the Lord for your people, as Abraham struggled?" These words of Pope Francis to the priests of Rome in March 2014 remind us of an essential mission of every priest: to act and intercede on behalf of those on our path whom God has entrusted us to serve.

In recalling the piety, zeal and unfatigued optimism of "that good, simple, honest priest of Connecticut," the June 1900 *Columbiad* article highlights the fruits of the establishment of the Knights of Columbus after only eighteen years: "Serving as a bulwark against indifference, [the Knights of Columbus] has checked that leakage from the ranks of the faithful which was formerly so immense and so deplorable a loss to the Church and which went unabated because no one took the trouble to pursue the layman into the paths of his

everyday social life and animate him there and everywhere with Catholic principle."

As chaplains, we can take inspiration from the life and example of the man of grace and manner with the "priest's face" who founded a men's society "under the towers of Yale College and at that time the most aristocratic parish in Connecticut." When others deemed it impossible, Father McGivney did not shrink from the task of inducing laymen to join a society which "extracted from its members certain religious qualifications, that is to say, the open profession of the Catholic faith and filial submission to the Church in matters of doctrine, discipline and morals."

Recognizing the plight of the Catholic immigrants and young men of his time, Father McGivney took the trouble to pursue and invite them to establish our Catholic fraternal society. This "warm-hearted priest of Christ's Church of Charity" has given each of us an example of the persistent Gospel charity at the heart of Pope Francis' call: to struggle and intercede on behalf of those we know and serve. To weep, pray, pursue and act on their behalf 124 years after the death of the venerable servant of God. May the example and intercession of Father McGivney inspire each of his successor chaplains to do the same.

Vivat Jesus!

of Columbus has since that become extraordinary; the Catholic layman has been brought to realize the preciousness of his birthright as a son of the Church: and Catholic citizenship, so long decried, so long pointed out as a menace to the country's institutions, has become indeed synonymous now with uprightness, piety, intelligence and social strength. The Knights of Columbus, by attracting to their ranks such integrity of moral principle, such elevation of mind and such loftiness of character, have dissipated the olden prejudices and caused the Catholic name to be everywhere honored. Moreover, a wonderful *esprit de corps* has through their work been infused into the Catholic body: and this, by serving as a bulwark against indifference, has checked that leakage from the ranks of the faithful which was formerly so immense and so deplorable a loss to the Church and which went on unabated because no one took the trouble to pursue the layman into the paths of his everyday social life and animate him there and everywhere with Catholic principle. *Nous avons changé tout cela*, may the followers of good Father McGivney assert with entire truth.

The establishing of the Knights as a society was distinctively a sacerdotal work. Their founder as a boy studied his classics under the Jesuit fathers at Montreal. Among them he imbibed so deep a spirit for erudition that he wished to become a Jesuit himself. His father, living at that time just outside the little city of Waterbury, a sturdy iron-molder by trade and in his leisure something of an agriculturalist, would not lend himself to encouraging in the son any such preference and, when in due time solicited, absolutely refused to grant paternal sanction. A few years later, the young McGivney, having lost his father and endured for a while some dint of distress, was given an opportunity to enroll himself as a student at Baltimore among the Sulpitians of St. Mary's. To them he unfolded his mind anew; and they, finding in him the ideal vocation, diverted him entirely from the thought of joining the Jesuits. The arena of stirring toilers rather than that of placid thinkers was the sphere best adapted to qualities and energies such as were his, they argued; and so, while praising scholarship as a possession of great value, they taught him to regard it as merely a subsidiary quality in a priest: humanity, and not the humanities, should engage henceforth his most devoted study; sympathy for human woes was a property more intrinsic than knowledge; to store up knowledge was good, they admitted; but to save souls was incomparably better. Such were the utterances which kept their echoes ringing in his ears when he came as a young priest of God into the great throbbing world. Humanity — its woes; human souls — their rescuing; with topics like these so persistently upon his mind, he studied and prayed and meditated and took counsel: then he went straight to work.

Sodalities were at that period the reigning fad in ecclesiastical circles. All very good, he reasoned, but still these were exclusively for women; there should be some such society also to reach the men. It was not that the men were exactly neglected; no, — but the task of inducing laymen in any considerable number to join an association which involved religious requirements seemed too great a problem for anyone up to that time to respond to. Father McGivney with sanguine faith made the attempt by bringing into being the Knights of Columbus. His good work has prospered beyond the vastest hopes. Prayerful benedictions have aided it. Our Holy Father, Leo XIII, is a man who loves societies made up of Catholic laymen as he loves the apple of his own eye; and it was this immense affection for laymen of high and noble purpose which in days so recent caused the highest representative of the Church in America, Mgr. Satolli, then apostolic

delegate and now a cardinal, to bestow upon the Association his warmest blessings; the serious, religious and benevolent purpose actuating the Knights of Columbus seems but the echo of the Pope's own encyclicals on the social question. Certainly too, the Holy Father has nowhere on earth so staunch and so vast a phalanx of determined champions; they are beyond all doubt the finest aggregation of Catholic laymen in the world.

I remember meeting with Father McGivney at New Haven in 1883, the year after the first incorporation of the Knights. He was then in the prime of his vigor, entrusted by a good but delicate pastor, Father Lawler, with the management of St. Mary's, a parish lying close under the towers of Yale College and at that time the most aristocratic parish in Connecticut. Father McGivney himself was anything but aristocratic; he was a man of extreme grace of manner in any society, but without any airs, without any "lugs," if you will pardon the expression. I saw him but once; and yet I remember his pale, beautiful face as if I saw it only yesterday; it was "a priest's face," and that explains everything, it was a face of wonderful repose; there was nothing harsh in that countenance although there was everything that was strong; there was nothing sordid, nothing mercenary, nothing of the politician, nothing of the axe-grinder. Guile and ambition were as far from him as from heaven. To meet him was at once to trust him; children actually loved him; and the very old people of the neighborhood, whom he hunted up and who got part of his time even on busiest days, called him a positive saint and meant it. At the city jail the wardens still hand down anecdotes of what Father McGivney said and did during visits which he paid the prisoners.

Elsewhere, too, incidents abound to his credit. A blind, aged man who used to live by charity, but who was not a Catholic went every Sunday to Mass at St. Mary's to hear "that voice." Non-Catholics found in Father McGivney a soul of immense sympathy which invited them strongly toward investigating the religious truths his lips proclaimed. Among the conversions due to God's grace in Father McGivney are two which to this day everyone still talk of at New Haven. One of these converts was David Buell, famous in his Yale days as a musician and author of the opera "Penikeese," but now unknown to the world, though a member of the Society of Jesus. The other notable convert was Miss Harwood, daughter of Rev. Dr. Harwood, the rector of the most distinguished Episcopalian congregation in the whole state, and a man of large scholarship and wealth. Miss Harwood's conversion attracted notice by reason of her distinction in the ranks of society, the refinement of her home and circle, and the great brilliancy of mind which she possessed, together with her superiority of education and extreme personal grace. The death of Miss Harwood which came all too early was yet attended with every consolation our holy faith could bestow.

Father McGivney's influence over men was something extraordinary. Young men particularly were attracted to him and hung upon his words with an eagerness which he himself often wondered at; hundreds petitioned for the light of his counseling and sent others too, to share his advice. It may be interesting in this connection to examine that group of earnest young souls who gathered around Father McGivney to discuss the first founding of a great Catholic fraternity. Every figure in that cluster presents a vigorous personality. ...

Two members of the old guard have clung exclusively to K. of C. affairs. These are Wm. M. Geary and Daniel Colwell. ... Mr. Colwell

Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive

From Supreme Knight Carl Anderson

Pope Paul VI, in his great encyclical on evangelization, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, quotes the Second Vatican Council's description of the Christian family as the domestic church. For Pope Paul VI, this means that to truly become a domestic church "there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church."

The Second Vatican Council also taught that every Catholic is called to holiness. And since the great majority of Catholics live out their lives in families, it is clear that the family should be a place in which each family member can grow in holiness.

As the saints have shown throughout history, holiness in life leads inevitably to witness in our daily lives. In our time, the work of evangelization is not reserved only for an elite few, but is the responsibility of all baptized Christians.

In a very real sense, we are all called to be missionaries. We are all called to "proclaim" the Gospel to those around us through our lives each day, and the privileged place for most of us to do this is within our own families.

The Christian family is essentially missionary in character because of this reality. In the words of St. John Paul II, "The family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 17). In fulfilling this mission, the Christian family is itself called to be an image of the loving communion that exists among the three Persons of the Trinity.

The Catholic family is able to reveal and communicate this love in a special way because it is founded upon sacramental marriage. Christian spouses first receive this love as a divine gift, but they also receive this love as a task. The task of Christian spouses to live and communicate this love first to each other and their children and then to others is at the center of the family's mission in the world.

For this reason, when the Christian family takes up the task "to become what it is" — a living icon in our world of God's own communion — the family stands at the heart of the Church's mission of evangelization. And when the family responds in this way to the design of the Creator, it truly becomes a "domestic church."

Recently, Pope Francis reminded us that Christian families "are the domestic church where Jesus grows in the love of a married couple, in the lives of their children."

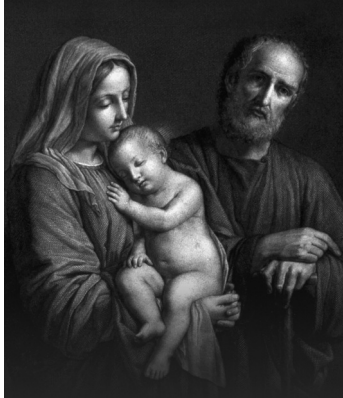
To help our families better become what they are called to be, the Knights of Columbus has launched this initiative entitled: "Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive."

Through this program, our families can realize more fully their mission to be an authentic domestic church through daily prayer, catechesis and Scripture reading, as well as through monthly charitable and volunteer projects they can do as a family. Please visit kofc.org/familyfullyalive to view the materials sent directly to local councils.

As we all know in our modern society, marriage difficulties can be a source of great suffering as well as a time for reconciliation and true inward renewal. As Pope Francis has stated, "The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open, [...] where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 47). Separated or divorced persons who remain faithful to their marriage vows call for the Church's attention in their situation, which is often lived in loneliness and poverty. People in canonically irregular marriages should not consider themselves as "separated from the Church, for as baptized

persons they can, and indeed must, share in her life" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 84).

"Pastoral charity impels the Church to assist people who have suffered the breakdown of their marriage and are living with their situation relying on the grace of Christ. A more painful wound results when these



people remarry and enter a state of life which does not allow them to receive Holy Communion. Clearly, in these cases, the Church must not assume an attitude of a judge who condemns (cf. Pope Francis, Homily, 28 February 2014), but that of a mother who always receives her children and nurses their wounds so they may heal (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 139-141). With great mercy, the Church is called to find forms of 'accompaniment' which can support her children on the path of reconciliation. With patience and understanding, she must explain to these people that their not being able to celebrate the sacraments does not mean that they are excluded from the Christian

life and a relationship with God" (*Synod of Bishops, The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization: Instrumentum Laboris*, 103).

This initiative can help all families, whatever their difficulties, deepen their relationship with the Lord. It can especially help divorced parents meet their obligation to raise their children in the Catholic faith and reassure them that their communion with the Lord is not severed, but rather can continue to grow stronger through prayer, scripture reading, participation in the parish community, service to others, and evangelization. In these ways, they too can be a part of our initiative and grow in their faith.

In this initiative, the Knights of Columbus turns in a special way to the Holy Family and makes our own the prayer of St. John Paul II that "every family may generously make its own contribution to the coming of his kingdom in the world," and "through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, the Church may fruitfully carry out her worldwide mission in the family and through the family."

In this way, the Order will undertake a yearlong preparation for the 8th World Meeting of Families to be held from Sept. 22-27, 2015, in Philadelphia.

In founding the Knights of Columbus, the Venerable Servant of God Father Michael J. McGivney sought to respond in both a temporal and spiritual way to the crisis in family life affecting Catholics in 19th-century America. As a young man he witnessed firsthand the challenges his mother faced as a single parent raising a family after the tragic death of his father. Later, as a priest he confronted on a daily basis the problems affecting the families of his parish community arising from poverty, violence, substance abuse, prejudice and discrimination. With creative genius and determination, Father McGivney responded to this situation with a variety of pastoral initiatives within his parish and most importantly by empowering generations of Catholic laymen to support the practical Catholic life of their families in founding the Knights of Columbus.

By advancing this new program, the Knights of Columbus continues to advance Father McGivney's mission and remains true to his vision.

I would also like to express a word of thanks to Father Luis Granados, DCJM, and to St. Mary Catholic Parish in Littleton, Colo., whose "Toward a Family Friendly Parish" program inspired this initiative and without whose help our program would not have been possible.



‘Building the Domestic Church’ New Initiative Begins in October

In October, we will launch “Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive” to help both our families and parishes grow in the faith.

This program will help Knights and their families prepare for the 8th World Meeting of Families to be held next year in Philadelphia, while also offering opportunities for daily prayer, catechesis, scripture reading, charitable projects and social activities that can be done together as a family.

A mailing of a booklet with the details of this program, monthly scripture readings, reflections, family activities, council volunteer

programs, and a suggested family movie night, will go out in early September. At that time, a website will also go live with additional information for the program and electronic versions of its materials.

As a council chaplain, we ask that you take the time to read through this material when you receive it, and work with your council and other interested parishioners, in helping to initiate this worthwhile program.

Watch the upcoming issues of *Chaplains Report* as well as *Knightline* and kofc.org for upcoming details on this program.

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is a busy man and, in business hours cannot brook disturbance. But yet once in a while he does make an exception when a stranger from afar comes in to bother him at his desk in the offices of the board of directors of the Knights of Columbus. He has reached the age where it is easy to relax into reminiscences; and so, with a cigar at hand and a leisure hour to smoke it in, those reminiscences teem forth like water bubbling from a spring. ... Even then, from time to time, he dropped back into personal recollections, naming often, and yet always with a noticeable tenderness, that kind young priest of twenty years ago whose image was in both our minds and whose large portrait stood upon the desk in front of us, — Father McGivney, the warm-hearted priest of Christ’s Church of Charity.

Rev. Richard Foley of Brooklyn, N.Y., who was a close seminary chum of Father McGivney, told me recently that the three points of character most noted in Father McGivney were his sense of orderliness, his depth of piety, and his fund of good humor. His taste for order was indeed remarkable. During his stay at Baltimore, the Sulpitians would not be content with anyone else for the post of Sacristan. His good humor too was often apparent; for everywhere

that he is spoken of, his happy words, his genial utterances, weighing more than nuggets of gold, are still remembered, and still treasured up. His piety too has been referred to. That piety crystallized itself in his immense charity. In the McGivney family there were three sons, both of the brothers being much younger than himself: and if Father McGivney could be said to have ever had one single worldly ambition, it was to hope that his brothers might enjoy a good education. The dearest wish of his heart has since that time been realized; for all three sons of the family have alike become priests, both of the others still surviving him. The elder of these is the Rev. Patrick J. McGivney of Middletown, Conn., at the present time state chaplain of Connecticut: the other is Rev. John McGivney, of Bridgeport, a young man of less than thirty years, well spoken of for his earnest yet graceful preaching.

Father McGivney the institutor of the Knights died as pastor of the parish of Thomaston, Conn., in August, 1890. He died without leaving any pecuniary debts; but he died also without owning a dollar: and the reason of it was that in his heart of charity he had given his last dollar away.