



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

The Encounter to Come

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The month of November offers a good opportunity to spiritually prepare our brother Knights for their deaths. We can assist them in asking God for the grace to die with hope and the knowledge that they have left behind a legacy of Christian witness.

In his catechesis on the mystery of death, Pope Francis reminds us that eternity is the proper standard from which to judge our lives. Unlike our human tendency to view our path as one going from life to death, the resurrection of Jesus and his defeat of sin reveals that our pilgrimage goes from death toward the fullness of life with God. "A person tends to die as he has lived. If my life has been a journey with the Lord, a journey of trust in his immense mercy, I will be prepared to accept the final moment of my earthly life as the definitive, confident abandonment into his welcoming hands, awaiting the face-to-face contemplation of his face. This is the most beautiful thing that can happen to us: to contemplate, face to face, the marvelous countenance of the Lord, to see him as he is, beautiful, full of light, full of love, full of tenderness. This is our point of arrival: to see the Lord" (*General Audience*, 27 Nov. 2013).

Let us remind our brother Knights of their duty to be watchful and to prepare themselves well for the life to come by staying close to the Lord through the sacraments and through charitable works of mercy where Jesus can be encountered in the poor and needy. Pope Francis constantly repeats that the spiritual program of our lives can be found in Chapters 5 and 25 of St. Matthew's Gospel — the beatitudes and the parable of the Last Judgment. "Solidarity in sharing sorrow and infusing hope is a premise and condition for receiving as an inheritance that kingdom which has been prepared for us. The one who practices mercy does not fear death. ... And why does he not fear it? Because he looks death in the face in the wounds of his brothers and sisters, and he overcomes it with the love of Jesus Christ" (*General Audience*, 27 Nov. 2013).

Father McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus with the ever-present reality of death in mind. Our Order exists so that our brother Knights may not fear that their passing will burden their loved ones left behind. May we also assist our brother Knights to prepare for the greatest moment of their lives and not fear the pilgrimage to the Father's house. As Pope Francis said, "We are disciples of the one who came, who comes every day and who will come at the end. If we can manage to be more aware of this reality, we will be less fatigued by daily life, less prisoners of the ephemeral and more disposed to walk with a merciful heart on the way of salvation" (*General Audience*, 4 Dec. 2013).

Our Mission: Fidelity, Truth and Charity

Excerpts from the homily of Pope Francis at the opening of the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the family; Oct. 4-22, 2015

"If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (1 Jn 4:12).

This Sunday's Scripture readings seem to have been chosen precisely for this moment of grace which the Church is experiencing: the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the family, which begins with this eucharistic celebration.

The readings center on three themes: solitude, love between man and woman, and the family.

Adam was living in the Garden of Eden. He named all the other creatures as a sign of his dominion, his clear and undisputed power, over all of them. Nonetheless, he felt alone, because "there was not found a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:20). He was lonely.

The drama of solitude is experienced by countless men and women in our own day. ... The number of people who feel lonely keeps growing, as does the number of those who are caught up in selfishness, gloominess, destructive violence and slavery to pleasure and money.

Our experience today is, in some way, like that of Adam: so much power and, at the same time, so much loneliness and vulnerability. ... God was pained by Adam's loneliness. He said, "It is not good that the man



should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gn 2:18). ... God did not create us to live in sorrow or to be alone. He made men and women for happiness, to share their journey with someone who complements them, to live the wondrous experience of love: to love and to be loved, and to see their love bear fruit in children.

Paradoxically, people today — who often ridicule this plan — continue to be attracted and fascinated by every authentic love, by every steadfast love, by every fruitful love, by every faithful and enduring love. We see people chase after fleeting loves while dreaming of true love; they chase after carnal

pleasures but desire total self-giving.

In this extremely difficult social and marital context, the Church is called to carry out her mission in fidelity, truth and love.

I remember when St. John Paul II said, "Error and evil must always be condemned and opposed; but the man who falls or who errs must be understood and loved. ... We must love our time and help the man of our time" (*Address to the Members of Italian Catholic Action*, 30 Dec. 1978).

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The Brilliant Foundation of the Church

*Excerpts from the homily of Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore
at the annual memorial Mass of the 133rd Supreme Convention*

You know, sometimes I think that the Transfiguration deserves a lot more attention than we tend to give it. ... This event is described in three Gospels and in the Second Letter of St. Peter. In those accounts, the Transfiguration is presented as the high point of Jesus' ministry, for here, on the heights of Tabor, Jesus not only reveals in human flesh the divine glory that is his for all eternity, but he also reveals how we are to be transformed so as to share the glory of God.

Moreover, as the Christian Tradition developed and unfolded, learned writers and saints have seen in the mystery of the Transfiguration the model or the paradigm for the sacramental life of the Church. The glory of God the Father can touch us and change us only when, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we have contact with the Body of Christ. In truth, the splendor, the beauty, the brilliance of God's glory shining forth in the mortal body of the Incarnate Son of God is the foundation for the entire sacramental life of the Church. ...

Dear friends, when we persist in asking what God's glory is we will find, with St. Gregory of Nyssa, that the glory of God revealed in the Transfiguration ultimately is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who appeared as a cloud overshadowing Jesus at the Transfiguration, the Spirit who is the bond of charity and the bond of unity between the Father and his beloved Son. ...



When we climb Mount Tabor with Peter, James and John, our eyes of faith behold the divine origin of that charity and unity which are at the heart of our beloved Order, the Knights of Columbus. Father McGivney didn't invent these principles; he drew them from the very heart of the Gospels he knew and loved so well. He knew that if we were to share the glory of God we must be people who are united in charity. ...

How many lives has Father McGivney's ministry changed and transformed? We are attracted to the saints and blessed of the Order, such as the Mexican martyrs, because in laying down their lives in self-giving love for the sake of the faith, they manifested in their flesh the glory of God revealed in the flesh of Christ.

As we listen to the names of the members of our Order, and their loved ones who have gone home to the Lord during this past fraternal year, let us pray for them. Let us pray earnestly that they who sought to put into practice the principles of charity, unity and fraternity may now fully share in the glory of God's self-giving love, manifested by the Incarnate Son of God on the mountain of the Transfiguration. We pray that in his mercy the Lord will forgive their sins and imperfections and make their souls ready for the perfect love, the perfect glory of heaven.

Vivat Jesus!

The Year of Mercy

*Excerpts from Pope Francis' Bull of Indiction
of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy*

The Holy Year will open on Dec. 8, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. This liturgical feast day recalls God's action from the very beginning of the history of mankind. ... On that day, the Holy Door will become a Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons and instills hope.

On the following Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent, the Holy Door of the Cathedral of Rome — that is, the Basilica of St. John Lateran — will be opened. In the following weeks, the Holy Doors of the other papal basilicas will be opened. On the same Sunday, I will announce that in every local church, at the cathedral — the mother church of the faithful in any particular area — or, alternatively, at the co-cathedral or another church of special significance, a Door of Mercy will be opened for the duration of the Holy Year. At the discretion of the local ordinary, a similar door may be opened at any shrine frequented by large groups of pilgrims, since visits to these holy sites are so often grace-filled moments, as people discover a path to conversion. Every particular church, therefore, will be directly involved in living out this Holy Year as an extraordinary moment of grace and spiritual renewal. Thus, the jubilee will be celebrated both in Rome and in the particular churches as a visible sign of the Church's universal communion.

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The Church must search out these persons, welcome and accompany them, for a Church with closed doors betrays herself and her mission, and, instead of being a bridge, becomes a roadblock: "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 2:11).

In this spirit we ask the Lord to accompany us during the synod and to guide his Church, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

'Hear Our Plea'

In a letter earlier this year, Archbishop Jean-Clément Jeanbart of Aleppo, Syria, discussed the plight of persecuted Christians in the Middle East. He begged that he be allowed to "raise my voice to call on all men and women of goodwill to hear our plea," asking that "all those who believe in the good and merciful God, and all those with compassion for the innocent, raise their voice with us and call on civilized countries to take action to bring about peace."

Raise consciousness of these Christians' tragic plight by working with the Knights of Columbus Christian Refugee Relief Fund. Encourage your council to order 5-inch olive wood crosses (\$5 each, minimum order of 10), crafted by Christians in the Holy Land. Then, sell the crosses in your community for a suggested donation of \$10 and donate the net proceeds of the sale to the Christian Refugee Relief Fund. The sale of each cross strengthens our ability to provide financial support to persecuted Christians and serves as a daily reminder to pray for our suffering brothers and sisters in the faith.

Encourage your council to hold special Masses or prayer services, inviting those members of the community who have purchased crosses to bring them for a special blessing. Councils and chaplains should work together to arrange these services.

For further details on ordering the crosses, please contact the Supply Department at 203-752-4214 or supply@kofc.org.

Monthly Suggested Activities

November

- Remember deceased Knights, family members and parishioners during a memorial Mass. Also, consider sponsoring a cemetery cleanup or a prayer service for the deceased.
- As part of the 5th Sunday Rosary Program, hold a rosary service Nov. 29 to help bring parishioners together in a spiritual activity and to promote devotion to Mary. Rosaries and program materials can be ordered through the *5th Sunday Rosary Kit* (SR-KIT). For more information, please call the Department of Fraternal Services at 203-752-4571.

December

- Join brother Knights in spreading the light of Christ by illuminating a Nativity scene at your parish on Dec. 1 at 8 p.m. local time. Offer to bless the Nativity manger or tree before the lighting.
- Focus on the spiritual importance of Christmas by offering an Advent retreat for Knights and parishioners. Consider including prayer and discussions on the Nativity passages of the Gospels, periods for personal reflection and individual spiritual direction, confession and the celebration of Mass. For additional ideas on Advent and Christmas for your parish, turn to the booklet *Journey to the Inn: An Advent Celebration* (#9898, available for \$1 each).
- Share Pope Francis' message for the upcoming Jubilee of Mercy, to begin on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, 2015.
- Organize a parish gathering for a showing of *Guadalupe: The Miracle and Message* to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12. Consider planning the event to coincide with the broadcast dates and times on your local station. Or, work with your council to order a copy of the DVD (available at knightsgear.com) for your parish and council library.

Best Practice of the Month

An admirable practice among Knights of Columbus councils is that of answering Pope Francis' call to charity.

Beginning in 2013, Connecticut Knights began a tradition of coat distribution to children in need on the day after Thanksgiving, turning the most famous shopping day of the year into one of charity and giving.

Let us follow their example, and likewise witness to the charity that Father McGivney saw as the very heart of the Order. Where possible, help plan a volunteer project on Black Friday. Otherwise, consider turning to pastors, schools and community organizations to determine needs that might be met through a charitable project held later in the month, such as an Advent food distribution or fundraising event.

Be sure to offer to bless the items that are being distributed. Or, lead the volunteers in prayer, asking that your council's efforts may truly assist the children and families in your parish and community.

For additional information on how your council can participate, visit kofc.org/community or contact the Department of Fraternal Services at (203) 752-4270 or fraternalservices@kofc.org.

If you or your council has established a similar practice that enhances the spiritual life of Knights and their families or increases their charitable efforts, please send the information to chaplains@kofc.org.



Monthly Reflection on Building the Domestic Church

I Would Die for the Family

By Father Luis Granados, DCJM

A few weeks ago, I participated in the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. An international congress on the family was held prior to Pope Francis' arrival. The witnesses and lectures clearly portrayed the beauty of the family fully alive, as well as its struggles and needs.

I had been asked to discuss two words during the conference that express the fulfillment of human life. These words are "radical surrender" or — in St. John Paul II's words — "the gift of oneself." We only truly find ourselves through giving of ourselves.

Our life is the best gift we possess. We would not (and we should not) give up our life for unimportant or secondary matters. If I offer my life, it must be for something that really matters — something more important than anything else, more important even than my own skin. Christ answered this question by dying for us. He explained his reason for doing so, saying, "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do" (Jn 13:15). Likewise, we are called to die for him and for our brothers and sisters.

During my visit in Philadelphia, I walked to St. John Evangelist Church, just a few blocks from the convention center, in order to venerate the relics of St. Maria Goretti. There was a long line of pilgrims waiting to pray before the body of this little girl who died when she was only 11. Maria Goretti offered her life for something greater than herself; she died for purity and for the truth of love, not for puritanism or traditionalism. She died for Christ, who had taught her the gift and mission of purity. As I was praying before the relics of so great and so young a saint, the courage of St. John the Baptist came to my mind. He also died for Christ, and the truth and sacredness of marriage and the family.

What would you die for? A few days ago, in his column in the *Denver Catholic*, Archbishop Samuel Aquila recalled the deaths of John Fisher and Thomas More. They did not die for nothing. They died for the indissolubility of marriage. For them, this was the cost of discipleship.

As shepherds, we are called to live according to the heart of Jesus and to be willing to die for our sheep. Probably (and hopefully) none of us will be beheaded like St. John the Baptist, St. Thomas More or St. John Fisher. Our "death for the family" will be realized in a very different way: It will be the "white martyrdom" of daily life, but it will require the same dose of courage and trust in the Lord as that which sustained these heroic saints.

I like to think that St. John the Baptist showed mercy in the same way as Pope Francis exhorts us to: He died forgiving Herod, Herodias and her daughter. He was judging not the sinner, but the sin. He loved these sinners with an immense love, and at the same time hated the sin with an immense hatred. "Among those born of women there has been none greater than him" (Mt 11:11). Blessed is he who died for the family!

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' Domestic Church initiative. Copies of the *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* booklet (#10162) can be obtained by contacting the Supply Department at 203-752-4214. An online copy of this booklet and additional resources are available at kofc.org/familyfullyalive. To order additional items mentioned in this newsletter, please visit knightsgear.com.



Prayer for the Dead

Pope Francis offered the following prayer during his Angelus address, Nov. 2, 2014.

God of infinite mercy, we entrust to your immense goodness all those who have left this world for eternity, where you wait for all humanity, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ your Son, who died as a ransom for our sins.

Look not, O Lord, on our poverty, our suffering, our human weakness, when we appear before you to be judged for joy or for condemnation.

Look upon us with mercy, born of the tenderness of your heart, and help us to walk in the ways of complete purification.

Let none of your children be lost in the eternal fire, where there can be no repentance.

We entrust to you, O Lord, the souls of our beloved dead, of those who have died without the comfort of the sacraments, or who have not had an opportunity to repent, even at the end of their lives. May none of them be afraid to meet you after their earthly pilgrimage, but may they always hope to be welcomed in the embrace of your infinite mercy. May our sister corporeal death find us always vigilant in prayer and filled with the goodness done in the course of our short or long lives.

Lord, may no earthly thing ever separate us from you, but may everyone and everything support us with a burning desire to rest peacefully and eternally in you.

Amen.