



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 SUPREME CHAPLAIN

The Need for a Sign

From a homily given to the Knights of Columbus Board of Directors in Mexico City, Feb. 16, 2016

**Archbishop
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Supreme Chaplain



Years ago my father bought a new car, a 1964 Chevy. He liked the new car except for one thing: It lacked gauges. It had a temperature and fuel gauge, but the other indicators were merely warning lights. By the time these lights came on, roadside assistance had to be called. My dad was looking for better and earlier indicators; he was looking for better signs to assure him that his car was performing well.

In today's Gospel, people are also looking for new and better signs. In spite of Jesus' miracles, people ask him for a sign, a sign that he was not only a prophet but indeed the long-awaited Messiah. They claimed to be looking for a guarantee that his core message, "repent and believe in the Gospel," was true.

Jesus was less than delighted with this request for a sign. He reminded his listeners that his message of repentance didn't come out of the blue, and Jesus did this by linking his preaching with that of Jonah, who called Nineveh to repentance. He told them that the people of Nineveh, who were Assyrians, repented at the preaching of Jonah but then said of himself, "There is something greater than Jonah here!"

SIGNS OF GOD'S TRUTH AND LOVE

I think Jesus deliberately understated matters when he said, "There is something greater than Jonah here." After all, the humanity of God's Incarnate Son is the most fundamental sign of all. By becoming one of us, the Eternal Son revealed the Father's love. Through the humanity of Jesus, the truth, love and glory of God shines forth. In Jesus, God the Father's love became audible, visible and tangible. ...

Yet, like the audiences who heard Jesus, we too look for signs. Faced with dilemmas, surrounded by problems and confusion, struggling with sins and our need for repentance, we sometimes wish the Lord would just show us what to do. Yet the Lord says to us, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor 12:9). In effect, he is saying, "You have in me all the signs you need: the gift, the sign, the sacrament of my humanity and those seven powerful signs we call the seven sacraments. You are given direction in Scripture, in the Church's moral and spiritual teaching."

... The problem is not a lack of signs. Rather, it is our reluctance to pay close attention to these signs. Do we have the courage to trust that God has the best in store for us? Do we have the faith to believe God is with us, even when things go wrong? Do we have a contrite heart, a prayerful heart capable of understanding these signs?



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

During our days here in Mexico, we will see an extraordinary sign of God's love. We will look upon the miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose appearance on Tepeyac hill unleashed the evangelization of the New World. If we listen carefully to her message, look deeply into her countenance, and see ourselves and our diverse cultures reflected in her image, we will find not a newly invented message but the sign of Jonah. We will see in Mary a loving invitation to repent and believe in the Gospel, to encounter her Son and to become better disciples.

Pope Francis has come to this country as a sign of hope, traveling, as is his custom, to places where hope is in short supply. He too is a sign calling us to repentance and belief in the Son of God made man. It should also be our hope and prayer during these days of pilgrimage that we ourselves will become ever more effective signs of God's love; signs that invite many to open their hearts to Christ; signs that convey convincingly the truth, goodness and beauty of the Gospel. And more than that, we ask Our Lady's intercession that our beloved Order, the Knights of Columbus, by living its Gospel principles of charity, unity and fraternity, may be an ever brighter and more visible sign of the Father's love, revealed in the humanity of Christ. *Vivat Jesus!*

Tilma Image Transcends Mexican Culture

Adapted from "Entrusting Poland to Our Lady of Guadalupe," published in the July 2012 edition of Columbia magazine, the below recalls the universal impact of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose feast we celebrate on Dec. 12.

After the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, a Polish soldier named Jerzy Skoryna settled in Mexico. There, he visited the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City and noticed the flags of countries that had been consecrated to Our Lady. He learned that in order for Poland to be consecrated, too, formal requests were needed from the cardinal primate of Poland and the Polish government. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński quickly sent the first request, but the communist regime in Poland refused to send its own request for ideological reasons. The president of the Polish Republic, who at that time was in exile but recognized by the Holy See, sent the second request.

The ceremony took place May 3, 1959, on the feast of Our Lady, Queen of Poland and the anniversary of the first Polish Constitution, the world's oldest constitution after the United States'. In his homily, Cardinal Miranda y Gómez, then archbishop of Mexico, said the people of Poland prayed for Mexican Catholics during their time of persecution in the 1920s and '30s. And through this consecration and the prayers of the Church in Mexico, the spiritual favor was being repaid.

Entrusting Poland to Our Lady of Guadalupe also reinforced the belief that victory over oppressive governments and enemies of the Church comes through Mary.



Running of the Rose

The Pilgrimage of the Silver Rose has been a Knights of Columbus tradition for 57 years. In 1960, Columbian Squires in Mexico, Canada and the United States decided to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe by carrying a rose across North America in her honor.

In recent years the program has expanded. Each year, Knights carry between three to six silver roses from Canada to Mexico, traveling along the western, central and eastern corridors of North America.

Every stop along the route is an occasion for prayer and spiritual renewal. The carrying of the rose — a symbol of childbirth in the 16th century and now a prominent symbol of the pro-life movement — reminds us of the dignity of life, as well as the protection that the pregnant Lady of Guadalupe extends to all persons, born and unborn.

For more information on the Running of the Rose, visit runningoftherose.org.

(Photo by Guillermo Moreno)



This Christmas, Accompany Mary and Joseph During Their Journey to the Inn

Living in our increasingly secular world, no doubt many of us — especially the young families in our parishes and councils — struggle with the increasing secularization of our communities. Christmastime is especially hard, when Santa Claus events and winter sales are replacing religious celebrations. In a culture that permits its public schools to ban the word "Christmas" entirely, how can we support our parish families and help them appreciate the historic reality of Christ's birth?

One of the simplest approaches would be to invite young families to participate in a reenactment of the Nativity. Guided by the K of C booklet *Journey to the Inn: An Advent Celebration* (#9898), you can welcome both children and their parents to participate in this exciting program, which highlights traditional hymns and customs used to celebrate the birth of Christ. These booklets are available free of charge, plus shipping, in lots of 300.

The booklet provides information on everything a parish would need to set up the event; unless you desire to adapt the program, no additional planning would be needed. It's very easy to implement in your parish!

Parishes and councils serving a Hispanic population might be particularly interested in this program, as this Advent celebration draws from the popular *Los Posadas* festivities held throughout Latin America and the southwestern United States. However, children and adults from all cultural backgrounds can definitely enjoy such celebrations. Visit kofc.org/christmas for details today!



Youth group members at St. Dominic Parish in Swansea, Mass. play the parts of Mary and Joseph during a Posada celebration in December 2013.

(Photo by Arlen Nydam)

On Nov. 26, the Knights will join the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in sponsoring a day of prayer for persecuted Christians.

This day will kick off a week of awareness and education. For information on how you can participate, refer to last month's issue of Chaplain's Report.

Journey to the Inn Makes Christmas Charity Real

Parishes and councils can make each Journey to the Inn celebration unique to their own community.

At St. Dominic Church in Swansea, Mass., Bishop James E. Cassidy Council 3669 hosts a traditional Nativity play with the assistance of local students. For the event, a pair of high school students portray Mary and Joseph while other young people adopt various supporting roles. In a nod to the Hispanic origin of the *Posada*, many young participants display colorful sombreros and ponchos.

Father Joseph Viveiros, pastor of St. Dominic Parish and chaplain of Council 3669, saw the program as a way to benefit both parish families and the local St. Vincent de Paul homeless shelter. During the festivities, attendees were asked to place donations in a basket.

St. Mary Cathedral Council 14055 in Austin, Texas, also hosted their own version of the *Posada*. Held for religious education students from the local cathedral's Catholic elementary and middle school, their reenactment welcomed live animals from a local farm, including donkeys, goats and lambs. Many of the participating children were from immigrant families with low-incomes, so the council incorporated ways to help them as part of the celebration: Three Knights, dressed as the Three Wise Men, carried in gifts for the few hundred children in attendance.



Donations collected for the homeless are seen at the annual *Posada* celebration at St. Dominic's Parish in Swansea, Mass. (Photo by Scott Indermaur)

Suggested Monthly Activities

DECEMBER

Join brother Knights in spreading the light of Christ by illuminating a Nativity scene at your parish on Dec. 5.

Focus on the spiritual importance of Christmas by inviting the men of your parish and councils to an Advent Night of Reflection that offers individual spiritual direction, confession and Benediction. To organize a day for families with young children, turn to the booklet *Journey to the Inn: An Advent Celebration* (#9898 — available free of charge in lots of 300; shipping costs apply).

Celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12, through a parish showing of *Guadalupe: The Miracle and the Message* (Available for \$15 at knightsgear.com. It's also available to watch free via Amazon Prime).

Lead your parish in the *Consecration to the Holy Family* (#10371) on the feast of the Holy Family, Dec. 31. The prayer may be found online at kofc.org/domesticchurch, or cards can be ordered through KnightsGear.

JANUARY

March in defense of the unborn during the National March for Life on Jan. 19. If you are unable to go to Washington due to parish obligations, offer to say the Blessing for Travelers for your brother Knights before their departure.

Invite council members and parishioners to pray a rosary novena for life just prior to the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, Jan. 22. You might conclude the novena with a special evening of prayer and adoration at your parish.

FEBRUARY

Join the USCCB in celebrating Black History Month in your parish and community. Visit usccb.org/issue-and-action to discover resources on celebrating the cultural diversity of the Church and on addressing the racial divide in the United States. Also of interest is W.E.B. DuBois's *The Gift of Black Folk*, available for purchase at knightsgear.com.

Mark the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes by asking your parish to support wounded or ill military personnel attending the 2018 Warriors to Lourdes Pilgrimage. For information on how to make a donation, visit warriorstolourdes.com.

BEST PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

The #1 Way to Engage Men in Pro-life Ministry

As your brother Knights prepare to make a stand for life at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., the OneLife LA Walk for Life in California or other pro-life demonstrations, an excellent, necessary and very effective practice is to get your brother Knights involved in pro-life events year-round. Ask your brother Knights to each grab their K of C rosary and head to the abortion facility nearest your council location. Each week, at least two men — and their wives, if possible — should commit just one hour to praying or offering sidewalk counseling in front of the facility. At this time, they should have literature on hand about local pro-life facilities that offer women alternatives to abortion, as well as materials that address the role of fatherhood. Another two Knights should be praying before the Blessed Sacrament for their brothers ministering on the streets.

Campaign to Save 1 Million Children



Help us reach our goal of 1,000 ultrasound machines by 2019 and save 1 million babies. For information on how you can lead your parish and council in working toward this goal, visit kofc.org/ultrasound. Questions may be directed to 203-752-4403 or william.obrien@kofc.org.



(CNS photo courtesy MACC)

Prayer to La Virgencita Morena del Tepeyac

Offered by Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles

O Mother! Bright star of the first evangelization of the New World!
Accompany us, we who seek to follow your Son in faith, hope and love.
Accompany us in his Catholic Church in our continental mission of the new evangelization.
Guide us as, once again, we seek to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations of America!

O gentle Lady of Tepeyac, help us in our daily apostolate. In all the actions of our daily lives,
may we carry your image of maternal tenderness to our brothers and sisters.
May we bring your Divine Son to live in the hearts of all who hunger for God.

Help us to become the saints we are meant to be.
Lead us so that we will always be instruments of God's designs, doing everything for the Lord's glory.
Until our world is filled with the light of Christ and the values of his Gospel.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!

Guadalupe: Creating a Continent of Hope

“**T**he message of Our Lady of Guadalupe helped to build bridges between cultures and worlds and began the transformation of our continent into a Christian continent of hope. ... Through her intercession, then and now, those throughout this hemisphere have found a deep and shared sense of faith, hope and identity.”
— Supreme Knight Carl Anderson

Interested in sharing the message of Guadalupe with your parishioners? Check out the film Guadalupe: The Miracle and the Message and explore the intricacies of the centuries-old wonder. It's now available free for Amazon Prime members! For additional details, visit guadalupefilm.com.