



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

Father Jonathan D. Kalisch, OP

Director of Chaplains and Spiritual Development



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Waiting in Hope

Pope Francis has highlighted the dispositions that aid the disciple along the Advent journey: "Perseverance in prayer: to pray

more. Diligence in fraternal charity: to draw closer to those in need. And joy in praising the Lord" (Homily, *Meeting Jesus with our Defenses Down*, 2 Dec. 2013). All of these dispositions encourage a greater openness to the encounter with the Lord, who the Pope reminds us, also seeks us out during Advent! By inculcating these practices in our lives, we ready ourselves for the encounter which gives hope and life anew. Prayer, fraternal charity, and joy: three dispositions to encourage our brother Knights to become steeped in this Advent.

Last year I had the privilege of visiting the Cenacolo Community in St. Augustine, Fla. Cenacolo is an international community, where young adult men and women who struggle with addiction go to live in Christian community. Through prayer, fraternal charity, and the joy and hope of the Gospel, they learn to live in the freedom of Christ. Witnessing the real joy present in the lives of young men and women,

where once darkness had pervaded, was truly to see the amazing work of God, renewing His creation. Every brother Knight should know about this great Catholic resource for those young people and families struggling with addictions.

Watching and waiting as pilgrims, like Mary and Joseph of Nazareth. As our brother Knights no doubt lead their councils in acts of charity and service, can we remind them to be watchful and wait anew for the Lord to encounter them, this holy season? Pope Francis reminds us that we are invited to perceive and understand "what is happening within us," to ask "if the Lord comes or does not come; if there is room for the Lord, or if there is room for celebration, for shopping, for making noise." This examination of conscience, he said, should lead us to ask ourselves: "Are our souls open, as the soul of Holy Mother Church is open, and as Mary's soul was open? Or have we closed our souls and put a highly erudite note on the door saying: please do not disturb?" (Homily, *Awaiting the Birth*, 23 Dec. 2013). May we await the only Hope that transforms anew the lives we live. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Vivat Jesus!

The Architect of the Domestic Church

By Father Luis Granados, DJCM

We know God entrusted his Only Begotten Son to a family, the family of Nazareth. Following God's example, we trust in the family and we know it really is a sleeping giant. But how can we help the family to become what it is called to be?

"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build. Unless the Lord guards the city, in vain does the guard keep watch" (Psalm 127:1). God is the architect of the domestic church. He builds the family through his Holy Spirit in many ways. Family prayers are the foundations of this building, an essential ingredient of God's work.

Because "the family that prays together stays together," we want to learn to pray as a family. What feeds a family, what builds the domestic church is prayer. Servant of God Father Patrick Peyton (1909-1992) coined the famous slogan: "The family that prays together stays together. A world at prayer is a world at peace." Through prayer, the family will not only resist the struggles of the daily life, but much more. It will become the light and salt of the world.

Throughout this month we want to encourage family prayer. It is good that each member of the family spends time in personal prayer, but there is something very powerful about praying together as a family. Jesus reminded us that where two or three are gathered together in his

name, there he is in the midst of them (Mt 18:20). Most importantly, Jesus revealed to us that when we pray with our children, their guardian angels always look upon the face of the Father (Mt 18:10). Thus, when a family prays together, an ocean of grace comes into the world!

How can we invite families to pray together? It is not enough to simply invite them and show them the beautiful horizon of prayer. We need to offer them a path of concrete practices, as Jesus did with his disciples. The message of Jesus is not "Just pray!" but "Pray in this way: prepare your prayer corner, gather your family at a good time, read the Sunday Gospel, invite your family members to give thanks to the Lord."

"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build." Through prayer, God speaks to the family and builds the domestic church. As Saint John Paul II said, "The prayer of the family has much to say to God" (*Letter to Families*). It also has much to say to others, to the whole parish and society. As the family prays, so prays the nation, and so prays the whole world in which we live.



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' "Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive" initiative. Copies of the *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* booklet (#10162) can be obtained by contacting the Supply Department at 203-752-4320. An online copy of this booklet and additional resources are available at kofc.org/familyfullyalive.

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Mother of the Civilization of Love

By Supreme Knight Carl Anderson

For nearly 500 years, millions of people have shown great devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, struck by her words to Juan Diego: “Am I not your Mother?” From her first appearance at Tepeyac in 1531, she has bestowed on humanity a tender motherly concern, and this remains an important part of her message today. If we approach Our Lady of Guadalupe as our mother, then she is not only a mother to us, she is a mother to everyone. That means we are all one family, despite our different countries and cultures.

Blessed John Paul II referred to this fact when he wrote in *Ecclesia in America*: “The appearance of Mary to the native Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac in 1531 had a decisive effect on evangelization. Its influence greatly overflows the boundaries of Mexico, spreading to the whole Continent. America, which historically has been, and still is, a melting-pot of peoples, has recognized in the mestiza face of the Virgin of Tepeyac, ‘in Blessed Mary of



Guadalupe, an impressive example of a perfectly inculturated evangelization.’ Consequently, not only in Central and South America, but in North America as well, the Virgin of Guadalupe is venerated as Queen of all America” (11).

He also wrote that the “renewal of the Church in America will not be possible without the active presence of the laity. Therefore, they are largely responsible for the future of the Church” (44).

So we must ask ourselves, what is the meaning of Our Lady of Guadalupe today? Does she play the same role in our countries’ history as she has for nearly 500 years? How do we respond to the great commandment of our Lord — love our neighbor as ourselves? This is the real message of Our Lady of Guadalupe’s motherly concern for each of us — that each person is actually a member of our family. And as Pope Benedict XVI told us in his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*: In a family no member must go hungry or lack the necessities of life (25).

Our Lady and the Church

by Msgr. Eduardo Chávez

Our Lady of Guadalupe asked her messenger Juan Diego to go to the bishop with her request for a “sacred house” to be built on Tepeyac. She wanted her appearance to be seen within the context of the Catholic Church, which was founded by her Son as the sacrament of salvation for the entire world. She continues today to lead us to Jesus Christ, the foundation of the Church, and to proclaim that we are one people in the family of God.

The Virgin of Nazareth, the Woman of Tepeyac, is the Mother of God and our Mother. She is one of us in blood and nature, and through her humanity has given us her Son, Jesus Christ. In this “sacred house,” Our Lady gives us freedom from all that oppresses: sin and death. In this temple, in this living Church, we are truly set free for life in God. The Virgin of Guadalupe’s mission is the essence of evangelization.

She is the first disciple and missionary of God’s love. In bringing together peoples of the Old World and the New World, the Madonna of Tepeyac is a symbol of the fraternity that should exist among all of the earth’s races; in her mestiza face — so sweet and serene — we are all her children. All human beings in Jesus Christ are Mary’s children, Mother of the Church, Model of the Church.

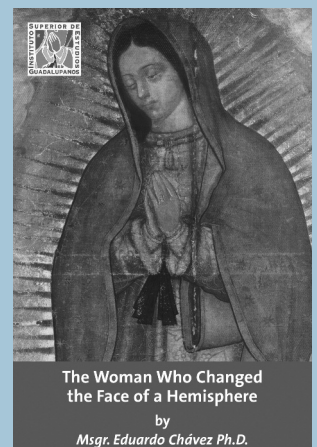
In 2007, in Aparecida, Brazil, Pope Benedict XVI gathered with the bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean for their Fifth General Conference. Present among them was the successor to the first bishop of Mexico, Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, the archbishop primate of Mexico City. The final document of the conference included a statement filled with the dew of Tepeyac. Mary, it said, “because she gave birth to the Savior of the world, brought the Gospel to our America. In the Guadalupan event, she presided, with the humble Juan Diego, at the Pentecost that opened to us the gifts of the Spirit” (*Address of His Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI*).

Moreover, the bishops joyfully proclaimed, “All those baptized are called to ‘begin anew in Christ,’ to recognize and to follow his presence with the same reality and freshness, the same power and affection, persuasion and hope, as were found in his encounter with the first disciples on the banks of the Jordan 2,000 years ago, and with the ‘Juan Diegos’ of the New World.”

The message of Guadalupe contains all that is needed for the true freedom to love fully, as Jesus destroys the chains of sin, and we walk together as brother and sister. Let us go forward to build one people, one culture of life, one civilization of God’s love from the hand of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who has promised that she “holds us in the crossing of her arms and the hollow of her mantle.”

Spread the Devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe

On Friday, Dec. 12, Catholics celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas. Encourage the members of your council and parishioners to learn more regarding the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe by distributing the Catholic Information Service booklet *The Woman Who Changed the Face of a Hemisphere: An overview of the Marian apparitions to St. Juan Diego in Mexico, 1531* (#4752).



Best Practice of the Month — The Gift of Charity

An admirable practice among Knights of Columbus chaplains is the promotion of charitable acts during the Christmas season. Encourage your council and parish community to give presents of friendship, understanding, kindness, love and compassion, such as:

- Reconciling with a friend or relative with whom you have quarreled.
- Visiting someone who is homebound.
- Serving and preparing meals at a soup kitchen.
- Providing transportation to shelters for homeless people.
- Donating Christmas gifts to newborns and single mothers temporarily housed in shelters.
- Working with local social service agencies or pro-life centers.
- Visiting nursing homes or hospitals, and joining with the residents in singing Christmas carols.
- Sending care packages to military personnel stationed overseas. Invite your entire parish to participate in collecting items for our servicemen and servicewomen and their families.
- Sponsoring a parish-wide toy drive for underprivileged children.
- Encouraging parishioners to donate usable clothing, shoes, blankets, diapers and other items to a program for needy families. Supply car seats or cradles to underprivileged mothers, or sponsor a “Tree for Life” program to collect baby items and supplies for crisis pregnancy service centers.

We would like to produce a listing of other commendable practices that we can consider for possible publication each month. If you or your council has established a practice that demonstrates a chaplain’s role in enhancing the spiritual life of Knights and their families, evangelization and outreach, or membership growth and retention, please send the information to chaplains@kofc.org.

Monthly Suggested Activities

December:

Advent Retreat

- Focus on the spiritual importance of Christmas in the midst of a world caught up in secular materialism by offering a retreat for Knights and parishioners.
- Let the liturgical year provide a focus for your retreat by planning the event close to a holy day, such as the feast of the Immaculate Conception — a holy day of obligation — or the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas.
- Begin with prayer and a passage from Scripture, particularly from the Nativity passages of the Gospels.
- Arrange the day with periods for personal reflection and individual spiritual direction, confession, and the celebration of Mass.

Keeping Christ in Christmas

- Encourage your parishioners and members of your council to wish each other a “Merry Christmas!” A Knights of Columbus-Marist Poll found that nearly two-thirds of adults nationally — 64 percent — think people should say “Merry Christmas,” while less than one-third — 31 percent — believe the appropriate greeting is “Happy Holidays.”
- Turn to the booklet *An Advent & Christmas Celebration* (#9898) for additional ideas on observing Advent and Christmas in your parish.

January:

Promote the Culture of Life

- With the approaching 42nd anniversary of the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, consider leading your council members, their families and parishioners in a rosary novena from Jan.14-22, 2015. Distribute a *prayer card* (#2072) encouraging the prayer of the rosary for this intention.
- Educate parishioners and members of your council on Church teachings through discussions, sermons or homilies on the culture of life, and distribute the Church’s teachings on the sanctity of life as outlined in the *Study Guide to Evangelium Vitae* (#2914).
- Assist your parishioners and council members in organizing a trip to Washington, D.C., for the March for Life on Thursday, Jan. 22. If you are unable to go to Washington due to parish obligations, support your brother Knights’ involvement in the pro-life movement by offering to say the Blessing for Travelers from the Book of Blessings before their departure.

Prayer to the Holy Family

*Offered By Pope Francis
on the Feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth*

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
in you we contemplate
the splendor of true love,
to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that our families too
may be places of communion and prayer,
authentic schools of the Gospel
and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
may families never again
experience violence, rejection and division:
may all who have been hurt or scandalized
find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
make us once more mindful
of the sacredness and inviolability of the family,
and its beauty in God’s plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
graciously hear our prayer. Amen.



**KNIGHTS
OF COLUMBUS®**

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1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510-3326



*Our warmest wishes
for a joyful Christmas and
a grace-filled New Year.*