



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 Our Pattern for Fraternity

Remarks from Knights of Columbus Midyear Meeting, Washington, D.C., Nov. 18, 2017



The Nativity by Cornelius de Vos (1584-1651) in St. Paul's Church, Antwerp, Belgium

What does it mean to belong to *this* fraternal order, the Knights of Columbus, and what distinguishes membership in the Knights from membership in other fraternal orders? ...

The ties that bind us together as brother Knights are far deeper than merely common interests and projects. Rather, we are bound to one another by bonds of faith.

We share the same faith in God and in his Son Jesus and in the Church. We are bound together by our membership in the Church, a world-wide communion of life and love established by Christ in the Holy Spirit. And we were founded by a holy parish priest to be a fraternity whose first aim is to help us as men — as husbands and fathers — to deepen and develop our life of faith and to express that faith in acts of charity that manifest our solidarity. ...

We see this in the life and ministry of Father McGivney, do we not? Long before Pope Francis spoke about bishops and priests needing to acquire what he calls “the smell of the sheep,” Father McGivney drew very close to his parishioners at St. Mary’s in New Haven.

He was their father in God, but he was also their brother in the Lord. He knew them by name. He knew their joys and sorrows, their hopes and dreams, their worries and anxieties. He was one with them in their tragedies and triumphs, and it was out of his pastoral solidarity with his people that the Knights was born — he raised up men who would support one another in practicing the faith, help one another in their role as fathers and husbands, and provide a means of support for their family in time of trouble and loss.

But his solidarity with those in need went beyond his parish.

Again, long before Pope Francis spoke about “going to the peripheries,” Father McGivney was standing by the side of a condemned man and in countless other ways bearing witness to the faith in the wider community.

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Pro-life: Pro-Family

The Holy Family serves as an ideal model for the families of your parish and brother Knights. In turn, each of these families serves as a model their communities. Now, as councils prepare to participate in pro-life events around the nation, we ask our chaplains to guide and strengthen their faith to help them in this great mission.

One way to do this is by reciting the Consecration to the Holy Family together as a parish on the first Sunday after Christmas, the feast of the Holy Family. *Prayer cards* (#10371) can be ordered by emailing supply@kofc.org or calling 203-752-4214. They are also available online at kofc.org/domesticchurch.



Men and Abortion: Help Them Find Healing

“Certainly what happened was and remains terribly wrong. But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. ... You will come to understand that nothing is definitively lost, and you will also be able to ask forgiveness from your child, who is now living in the Lord.” — St. John Paul II

Countless numbers of men and women have been shattered by abortion. Many live with the secret of abortion, feeling so broken they can’t bring it to light. As Catholics, and especially as priests, we must meet them with love and kindness, and without condemnation. We must help them welcome God’s mercy — the only path that can truly heal their wounds.

Knights of Columbus chaplains have a particular ministry to men, and this ministry extends to any and all men who have been affected by abortion. Some have encouraged a wife, sister or daughter to have an abortion. Others abandoned their partners or wouldn’t commit to a long-term relationship. Some thought they were not allowed to speak up as fathers, succumbing to the false notion that abortion is solely a women’s issue.

SEE **HEALING**, PAGE 3

Post-Abortion Healing for Men

National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation and Healing, Inc.

Founded in 1990, NOPARH provides training for care providers; produces and distributes audio, video and printed materials; and sponsors the Healing Vision conference. It also maintains a national “800” referral line (1-800-5WE-CARE) for those seeking assistance in reconciling an abortion experience and retains the International Post-Abortion Support Service Directory.

Project Rachel

Project Rachel is the post-abortion healing ministry of the Catholic Church. Founded in 1984 in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Project Rachel is now in more than 110 dioceses in the United States. This diocesan-based ministry is made up of a network of specially trained clergy, spiritual directors and therapists who provide compassionate, confidential and skilled one-on-one care to anyone whose life has been impacted by an abortion.



Silent No More

This nondenominational Christian campaign raises public awareness and seeks to break the silence about the emotional and physical pain of abortion. Since 2002, it has held 1,858 gatherings in 17 countries, where 6,328 women and men have shared their abortion testimonies. Thousands of additional testimonies have been posted on their website. People who are not ready to publicly share their testimony are invited to “register their regret” or post memorials to their lost children. Visit silentmoreawareness.org for details.

“The Hollow Men”

Published by the USCCB’s Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, this short pamphlet addresses abortion and the resulting psychological injury.

Men and Abortion: Finding Healing, Restoring Hope (#334)

This Catholic Information Service booklet, available in both English and Spanish, addresses grief and trauma faced by men after an abortion. It shows how they can learn to seek forgiveness from God, give the gift of forgiveness to others and, finally, forgive themselves. For details, visit kofc.org/cis.

Healing Within Marriage From an Abortion

This webpage reveals how countless marriages suffer from abortion. It also gives encouragement to persons who have not yet told their spouse about a past abortion. The text is included as either a printable pamphlet or bullet inserts for easy sharing. The webpage can be found at www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2014/healing-within-marriage-from-an-abortion.cfm.

FRATERNITY, FROM PAGE 1

His example sets the pattern for our fraternity. ... Father McGivney taught us to root our fraternity in Christ’s generous love that prompts us, as St. Paul said, “to defer to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph. 5:21). It is a fraternity in which we truly regard ourselves as brothers in Christ and genuinely try to help each other to be both good men and good disciples of the Lord who are conscious of our solidarity with the needs of others, including those who are “beyond our comfort zone” as Pope Francis often says.

That solidarity includes those who no longer practice their faith and as the number of the non-affiliated grows, this reality should be of the greatest concern to us — they are our brothers and sisters.

Our solidarity extends to the unborn threatened with abortions, to families that are in crisis, to inner-city kids that need a warm coat, to young people competing in the Special Olympics, to victims of natural and man-made disasters, and to persecuted Christians in the Middle East, in Africa, and in Asia many of whom live at the point of a gun, many of whom are victims of genocide.

Jesus has vastly expanded the answer to the question “Who is my neighbor?” And the Knights of Columbus every day is responding magnificently to the challenge which the Lord has put before all his disciples. Ours is a brotherhood of holiness that puts us in solidarity with those in need — in our church, in our families, in our communities and throughout the world.

As we approach the end of the year, let us take stock of our blessings. Our fraternity in Christ is one of the greatest gifts and blessings in our lives and so we should never let a day go by without thanking God and asking for the grace to strengthen our fraternity and also to extend it to others.

As we think about who we are as an Order and what we do, we have every reason to be proud of the Knights and every reason to go out and recruit new members. In a selfish, me-first world, we are an order founded on charity. In a time of deep and bitter division, we are an order founded on unity.

In a time of fragmentation, isolation and loneliness, we are one of the greatest fraternities in all the world. In a time when many call into question the goodness of their homeland, we are a patriotic order that keeps our eyes fixed on our true homeland in heaven.

I for one am proud to be a part of this fraternity with you, my brothers, and I pray that in the months ahead we will persuade many others to join us — for the glory of God, for the good of the Church, for the good of our beloved Order and for the salvation of souls. *Vivat Jesus!*

Suggested Monthly Activities

JANUARY

March in defense of the unborn during the National March for Life on Jan. 19. If you are unable to attend, 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 uscgb.org/issue-and-action to discover resources on celebrating the cultural diversity of the Church and addressing the racial divide.

Mark the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes by supporting the 2018 Warriors to Lourdes Pilgrimage. For information, visit warriorstolourdes.com.

Encourage Knights and parishioners to incorporate faith formation within their Lenten activities (e.g., hold a faith-centered talk during the council's next fish fry).

On Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14, invite married couples of the parish to "re-Christianize" St. Valentine's Day in a Lent-friendly celebration of Catholic marriages.

Organize a Lenten men's retreat for parishioners and members of your council. If your parish calendar permits, lead a full weekend of reflection to offer a greater opportunity for spiritual enrichment, contemplation and meditation on the passion of our Lord.

MARCH

Honor St. Joseph as patron of the Church by holding a novena from March 11 to March 19, his feast day. Encourage deeper devotion to St. Joseph by distributing the Veritas Series booklet *St. Joseph: Our Father in Faith* (#328) and *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* (#10162).

Celebrate March 25 as the international Knights of Columbus Day of Prayer for the Unborn Child by organizing a pro-life Mass or prayer service with your council. Invite all members of the community, including public officials and health care workers, and distribute the *Prayer for Life* (#4665).



Celebrate Founder's Day on March 29 by planning events in honor of Father McGivney's legacy. For ideas, visit the Council section of kofc.org/service.

BEST PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

Going Beyond the Council Meeting

A best practice is to maintain a blog or webpage to keep up with your brother Knights, including those who don't regularly make it to K of C meetings. One of the blogs that recently caught our eye is that of Father Corey Van Kuren, chaplain of Peter T. Campon Council 206 in Binghamton, N.Y. Calling his monthly blog "Chaplain Corey's Chat," Father Van Kuren addresses topics of interest to members. One post is particularly appropriate as we head into the Christmas season:

“Coming off our beautiful seasons of Advent and Christmas, we now find ourselves early in Ordinary Time. But there need not be any sense of ordinary-ness in our continuing to seek a deeper prayer life, experience of Christ or holiness. Quite the contrary, we should seek to bring the Christ of Christmas into the entire year!

Remembering the peace the Christ Child brings, we need to bring that peace to our homes, schools, offices, marketplaces and Church.

Remembering the gifts we received, we need to be the gifts to others, those most in need. Bring the gift of Christ to all you meet, everywhere.

Be Christmas people always. Be gifts to one another always. Do this and we will grow holier and holier each day and season, which, by the way, is the point of it all!!!”

Our thanks to Father Van Kuren for his excellent posts and words of inspiration. His blog posts may be found at <http://www.kofc206.org/chaplain-coreys-chat>.



Christmas trees on display during the Knights of Columbus Museum's annual Christmas Tree Festival. Each year, hundreds of Connecticut students decorate the trees with help from museum staff and volunteers. Winning schools receive gift certificates for educational products — which is one simple way to bring the charity of Christmas into our schools all year round!

HEALING, FROM PAGE 1

Whatever the reasons that lead them and their partners to abortion, many men now regret their lost fatherhood. They suffer grief, anxiety, guilt, helplessness and anger. For years, many have suffered in silence. The first-ever conference on men and abortion wasn't held until 2007, a full 34 years after *Row v. Wade*, and even with the existence of such forums, many men still don't know where to turn for counseling. They need our help.

- From the pulpit, address post-abortion struggles of both men and women. Invite these men and women to seek God in the sacrament of penance, and encourage them to seek out post-abortion healing groups, such as Project Rachel or the Silent No More campaign.
- Speak to the men in your council about the importance of men volunteering at pro-life events.
- Collaborate with your council in setting up and/or leading support groups for all men in the area. Consider creating a small group that directly discusses fatherhood or finances and marriage, or a mentorship program that teaches younger men about the importance of chastity, commitment in relationships and responsible parenting.
- Have information on the parish and council website about abortion healing for both men and women.
- Invite men to proactively spread the pro-life message by assisting with a 40 Day for Life prayer vigil. For details, visit 40daysforlife.com.

Epiphany Blessing of Homes

The family is called the domestic church, and as such, each family serves as a place where faith is nurtured and love sustained. It is under frequent attack, and we must do all we can to support each and every family. The greatest support we can provide is our sacrifice and prayers.

A home blessing is a great way to protect and guard our families. Simply welcome any families interested in having their homes blessed to reach out to you or the parish secretary. Such blessings traditionally take place around the world on the feast of the Epiphany: many faithful around the world plan on blessing their homes by marking “20+C+M+B+18” — indicating the year of the blessing and the phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat* (May Christ bless the house) — above their doorway.

We highly encourage all our chaplains to promote this beautiful tradition in their parishes and councils. Be sure to bring copies of the *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* (#10162) to distribute to families after the blessing.

Lord God almighty, bless this home,
and under its shelter let there be
health, chastity, self-conquest,
humility, goodness, mildness,
obedience to your commandments
and thanksgiving to
God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
May your blessing remain always in this home
and on those who live here;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

