



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

A Nine-Month Novena for the Family

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The family remains at the heart of the founding charism of the Knights of Columbus. Father McGivney understood well the perils threatening family life in the 19th century. In 1873, at the age of 21, he had to interrupt his own seminary studies upon the death of

his father, Patrick, to care for his mother and six younger siblings. It was only with the financial assistance and sacrifice of his future brother-in-law Michael Lawlor (who himself had two brothers who were priests), as well as extraordinary support from Bishop Francis Patrick McFarland of Hartford, that our founder was able to return to the pursuit of his theological studies. It was this personal experience that shaped his response to the pastoral challenges threatening the families he served as a young vicar at St. Mary's in New Haven, Conn.

Today, the Church again takes up "the pastoral challenges of the family in the context of [the new] evangelization" with the recent conclusion of the Synod of Bishops on the Family. Acknowledging the divide presented by the media, Pope Francis reiterated that "no intervention called into question the fundamental truths of the Sacrament of Marriage, namely: indissolubility, unity, fidelity and openness to life. This was not touched" (*General Audience*, 10 Dec. 2014).

The Holy Father continues to ask us to accompany the synodal path with prayer. Many of our councils are doing just that through the Domestic Church Initiative. In addition, I invite you to consider beginning a nine-month novena of prayer to St. John Paul II and Venerable Father McGivney, to celebrate council Masses and to offer programs of study on the family with our brother Knights. September will witness the first pilgrimage of Pope Francis to America, as well as the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, with the Order being a

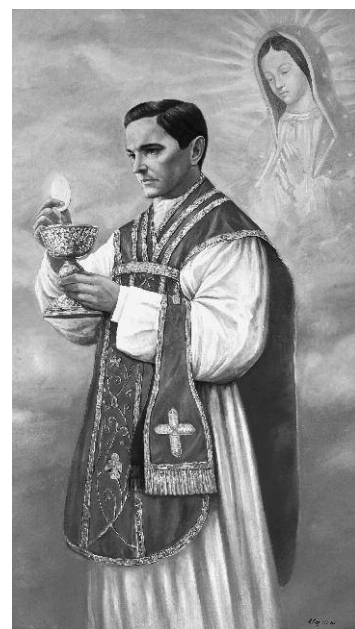
major sponsor. Next October, the Synod of Bishops will meet on the theme "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World." Pope Francis has said, "The prayer and reflection which must accompany this journey is required of all the People of God." His own weekly audiences for 2015 will reflect on the family and offer meditations "on this great gift that the Lord has made to the world from the very beginning, when he entrusted Adam and Eve with the mission to multiply and fill the earth; that gift that Jesus confirmed and sealed in his Gospel" (*General Audience*, 17 Dec. 2014).

I ask each of you reading this to pray about how we, as brother Knights, might respond creatively, pastorally and spiritually to this critical need of prayer and preparation for the Church. Please send me any suggestions you may have at frjon.kalisch@kofc.org.

Pope Francis reminds us of what can happen in our councils "in seeking to make love and not hate normal, making mutual help commonplace, not indifference or enmity. ... This is the great mission of the family: to make room for Jesus who is coming, to welcome Jesus in the family, in each member" (*General Audience*, 17 Dec 2014).

May this New Year of Grace be a time for renewal for every council, brother Knight and family we serve.

Vivat Jesus!



The Family — School of Forgiveness, Source of Peace

By Father Luis Granados, DCJM

Forgiveness is a topic especially close to our Holy Father's heart. His vocation, beginning when he was 16 years old, is very connected with the sacrament of reconciliation. On Sept. 21, 1953, he entered his local church and asked for confession. "Something very rare happened to me. ...It was a surprise, the astonishment of an encounter. I realized that God was waiting for me" (Rubin and Ambrogetti, *The Jesuit*).

The family is the first place where we learn to forgive. Our parents teach us to say: "I am sorry. Forgive me."

As part of this school of forgiveness, in the family we learn the Our Father. When our parents repeat with us "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," they teach us the prayer of Jesus not just with their words, but especially with their own forgiving love.

In order to forgive, we need to pray the Our Father. To forgive means

to really offer a new beginning. Therefore, we can only forgive each other with the grace of God, the Lord of Mercy. We see now one of the fruits of family prayer; the family that prays together will stay together because it will be able to forgive.

As our first school of forgiveness, we see the family is essential for the building of human society. As Benedict XVI said, the family "is fruitful for society because family life is the first and irreplaceable school of social virtues" (*Homily*, June 3, 2012). We witness the joy of so many families who point out the paths for growing in love by being patient with the failings of others, by being able to forgive and seek forgiveness, and by overcoming with intelligence and humility any conflicts that may arise.

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Editor's Note: *The following is a brief overview of some of the free programs offered to eligible members and their families. In your role as chaplain, it's important to know how the Knights can help protect members and serve the Catholic families in your parish.*

Caring for Our Own

The Knights of Columbus approaches its insurance operations as part of a brotherhood and for the sake of Knights and their families. "Insurance by Brother Knights, for Brother Knights," we like to say.

That's part of what makes us unique in the insurance industry. Our focus is on providing top quality products and services to our members, to protect their families, so that we and they can further the mission of our venerable founder.

Several of these products and services are truly unique. Over the years, we have released special products and programs to our members — some of which are given at no cost — because we do care, and because we do believe that we are our brother's keeper.

Accidental Death Benefit

We extend to each of our members an Accidental Death benefit for free, just by virtue of their membership in the Knights of Columbus.

The program, which is only available in insurance jurisdictions, provides a benefit of \$1,000-\$2,500 upon the accidental death of any member or his spouse (subject to certain age restrictions).

The program was launched at the 113th Supreme Council Meeting in 1994 and has continued to the present day, providing more than \$12.5 million in benefits.

In addition to the Accidental Death benefit, the Knights of Columbus and our agents offer a number of free services to our members and their families.

Survivor Assistance

Our agents are committed to providing survivor assistance to widows and families left behind after the loss of a loved one.

Knights of Columbus agents stand by our members and their widows, helping them to contact their attorney to sort out the will, make funeral arrangements, notify and coordinate with the council, resolve any financial matters, file claims (including those with companies other than the Knights of Columbus), and file for survivor or veteran benefits, if necessary.

We offer two additional services to help Knights' families plan. The first is Profiles™ Forecaster, a comprehensive and complimentary industry tool that helps families evaluate their financial situation and determine what insurance protection — if any — may be needed. The second, the *Knights of Columbus Personal Planning Workbook*, helps members compile final wishes and important information (including

accounts, passwords, funeral arrangements, etc.) for their survivors. Both of these services are free through a Knights of Columbus agent.

Family Fraternal Benefit Program

To our insurance members* we offer two additional programs: the Family Fraternal Benefit Program and the Orphan Fraternal Benefit Program.

The Family Fraternal Benefit Program offers two distinct benefits. The first offers insurance eligibility to uninsurable children. Through the program, a member can purchase a \$5,000 life insurance policy for an otherwise uninsurable child at standard rates before the child is 61 days old, or at a rated premium before the child's 18th birthday. A member can also purchase a \$5,000 policy at standard rates for a child between the ages of 3 and 18 years old who is mentally impaired.

The program also offers death benefit coverage to members who have lost an infant child less than 61 days after the child's birth, or who have lost an unborn child in a stillbirth after the 20th week. (The Order affirms that life begins at conception. In this instance, the benefit requires a certified death certificate for the stillborn child, hence the 20-week rule.)

The Orphan Fraternal Benefit Program also provides two benefits. The first is an \$80 monthly benefit for each eligible orphan until their 19th birthday. The second is a scholarship program that grants eligible orphans up to \$1,750 per year for a four-year period.

In a letter addressing the programs, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson noted that "these benefits augment the tradition of fraternity established by Father McGivney, namely, that *the Order cares for its own*; it expands upon a basic reason for which he founded the Order: 'of rendering pecuniary aid to its members, their families, and beneficiaries of members and their families.'"

They are part of what makes us unique. They are part of what makes us a brotherhood.

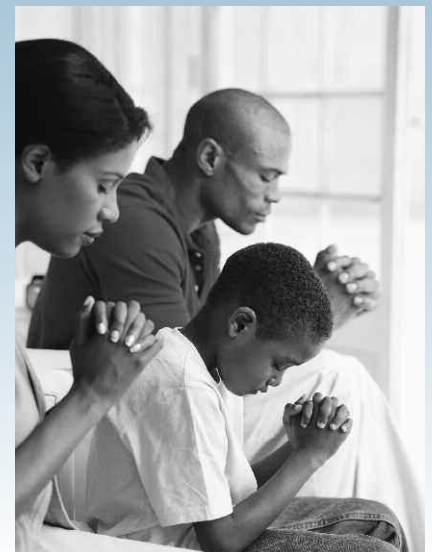
** To be eligible for the Family Fraternal Benefit Program and/or the Orphan Fraternal Benefit Program, the member must be in good standing and either he or his wife must be insured under a Knights of Columbus certificate requiring an annual premium of at least \$150 or providing at least \$5,000 in permanent life insurance coverage. Eligibility for the Orphan Fraternal Benefit Program is also contingent on the child being covered by an individual Knights of Columbus certificate.*

FORGIVENESS, FROM PAGE 1

As pastors, how can we help the families? First of all, we can witness the beauty of their vocation to teach and learn forgiveness. Secondly, we can invite them to dialogue and pray as a family. Thirdly, we can help them heal wounds through the frequent sacrament of reconciliation, celebrated as a joyful feast of the family. In the confessional, as Pope Francis experienced when he was 16 years old, God is waiting for the family, as the Good Samaritan of the wounded family.

When Christ visits the family, he comes as Prince of Peace. This is the path indicated by Pope Francis recently: "In imitation of the Holy Family, every Christian family must make a place for Jesus in its home. For it is through the love of such 'normal' families that God's Son quietly comes to dwell among us, bringing salvation to our world" (*General Audience*, Dec. 17, 2014).

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.



Best Practice of the Month — Promoting the Culture of Life

One admirable practice among Knights of Columbus chaplains and councils is the regular recitation of prayers, particularly the rosary, offered for the promotion of the culture of life.

Further encourage a prayerful commitment to the culture of life in your own council and parish. With prayer at the center of all activities, Knights and their families may be inspired to become even more involved in pro-life efforts in their parish and community. Join Knights and parishioners in prayer in front of local pro-abortion facilities or help organize a Day of Prayer for the Unborn in your parish.

Other admirable practices include arranging a continuous novena to support those active in the pro-life cause and defense of life:

- Arrange a monthly sign-up sheet asking parishioners to volunteer to pray five decades of the rosary or another appropriate prayer in their own homes. Encourage Knights in your council to volunteer on the days without coverage to ensure continual prayers for the recognition of the sanctity of life.
- Periodically, join together in a public praying of the rosary at your parish or a council location.

Encourage Knights and interested parishioners to form such pro-life prayer groups by preaching about the Church's teachings on human life. Share with them the words of Pope Francis: "Human life must always be defended from its beginning in the womb and must be recognized as a gift of God that guarantees the future of humanity" (*Letter to Brazilian Families for National Family Week*).

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

January

Promote the Culture of Life

- From Jan. 14 through Jan. 22, 2014 — the 42nd anniversary of the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion — lead your councils members, their families and parishioners in a rosary novena for the end to abortion. 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.

February

- Organize a Lenten retreat for parishioners and members of your council. Allow the opportunity for prayer, reflection, faith sharing and confession. If time allows, consider leading a weekend of reflection to offer an even great opportunity for spiritual enrichment, contemplation and meditation on the passion of our Lord.
- "May this Lenten season find the whole Church ready to bear witness to all those who live in material, moral and spiritual destitution the Gospel message of the merciful love of God our Father, who is ready to embrace everyone in Christ. We can do this to the extent that we imitate Christ who became poor and enriched us by his poverty. Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance. I distrust a charity that costs nothing and does not hurt" (*Message of Pope Francis for Lent 2014*).

For Every Family on Earth

A prayer of St. John Paul II

Lord, from You every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.
Father, You are Love and Life.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, born of woman,
and through the Holy Spirit, the fountain of divine charity,
grant that every family on earth
may become for each successive generation
a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that Your grace may guide the thoughts
and actions of husbands and wives
for the good of their families
and of all the families of the world.

Grant that the young may find in the family
solid support for their human dignity
and for their growth in truth and love.

Grant that love, strengthened by the grace of the Sacrament
of Marriage, may prove mightier than all the weaknesses
and trials through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out
her worldwide mission
in the family and through the family.

We ask this of You, who are Life, Truth, and Love
with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

L'Osservatore Romano, 5-25-80, 19

St. John Paul II, pray for us!



Every Human Life Is Sacred

Excerpts from an address of His Holiness Pope Francis at the Commemorative Conference of the Italian Catholic Physicians' Association on the occasion of its 70th anniversary

There is no doubt that, in our time, due to scientific and technical advancements, the possibilities for physical healing have significantly increased; and yet, in some respects it seems that the capacity for “taking care” of the person has diminished, especially when one is sick, frail and helpless. In effect, medical and scientific achievements can contribute to improving human life, provided that they are not separated from the ethical root of these disciplines. For this reason Catholic doctors commit to ... a human and spiritual mission, as a true lay apostolate.

Attention to human life, especially to those in greatest difficulty, that is, to the sick, the elderly, children, deeply implicates the mission of the Church. The Church also feels called to participate in the debate which focuses on human life, presenting her proposal on the basis of the Gospel. In many places, quality of life is primarily related to economic means, to “well-being,” to the beauty and enjoyment of physical life, forgetting the other, more profound, interpersonal, spiritual and religious dimensions of existence. In fact, in the light of faith and right reason, human life is always sacred and always has “quality.” There is no human life that is more sacred than another: every human life is sacred! There is no human life qualitatively more significant than another, only by virtue of resources, rights, greater social and economic opportunities.

This is what Catholic doctors try to affirm. ... [Their] work seeks to bear witness by word and deed that human life is always sacred, valuable and sacrosanct. As such, it must be loved, defended and cared for. Professionalism, enriched with the spirit of faith, is a further reason to collaborate with those — even from different religious perspectives or thought — who recognize the dignity of the human person as a criterion for their activities. Indeed, while the Hippocratic Oath commits [doctors] to always be servants of life, the Gospel drives [them] further: to love life always and in any case, especially when it requires special care and attention. The predominant school of thought sometimes leads to “false compassion” which holds that it is a benefit to women to promote abortion; an act of dignity to perform euthanasia; a scientific break-



through to “produce” a child, considered as a right rather than a gift to be welcomed; or to using human lives as laboratory animals, allegedly in order to save others. Instead, the compassion of the Gospel is what accompanies us in times of need, that compassion of the Good Samaritan, who draws near and provides concrete help (cf. Lk 10:33). Your mission as doctors places you in daily contact with so many forms of suffering. I encourage you to take them on as “Good Samaritans,” caring in a special way for the elderly, the infirm and the disabled. Faithfulness to the Gospel of life and respect for life as a gift from God sometimes require brave choices that go against the current, which in particular circumstances may become points of conscientious

objection. This faithfulness brings with it many social consequences. We are living in a time of experimentation with life. But it is harmful experimentation. Making children, rather than accepting them as a gift, as I said. Playing with life. Be careful, because this is a sin against the Creator: against God the Creator, who created things this way. Many times in my life as a priest, I have heard objections. “Tell me, why, for example, does the Church oppose abortion? Is it a religious problem?” — “No, no. It’s not a religious problem” — “Is it a philosophical problem?” — “No, it’s not a philosophical problem.” It is a scientific problem, because there is a human life there and it is not licit to eliminate a human life to resolve a problem. “But no, the modern school of thought...” — “Listen, in the old and the modern schools of thought, the word kill means the same thing!” The same is true for euthanasia. We all know that with so many elderly people in this throwaway culture, euthanasia is being performed in secret. And this is saying to God: “No, I will end life, as I see fit.” A sin against God the Creator: think hard about this.

St. Camillus de Lellis, in proposing the most effective method to care for the sick, simply said: “Put more heart into those hands.” Put more heart into those hands — this is my hope as well. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Salus Infirmorum*, support the intentions with which you intend to continue your action.