



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2025

Contact: communicationsdept@kofc.org

Knights of Columbus Celebrates the 125th Anniversary of the Organization's Patriotic Fourth Degree; Presents a Statue of Founder Blessed Michael McGivney at New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral

"America's Parish Priest" will inspire millions of faithful in "America's Parish Church"

New York, NY — The Knights of Columbus celebrated the 125th anniversary of the organization's Fourth Degree on February 22 and presented a new statue of Founder Blessed Michael McGivney at a special ceremony in New York's iconic St. Patrick's Cathedral. The day's events culminated with a Vigil Mass, offered by His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan, archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York as principal celebrant and homilist.

In his remarks, Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly thanked Cardinal Dolan for welcoming the Knights and the new statue of Blessed Michael McGivney into St. Patrick's Cathedral. "The statue that we have unveiled today will inspire the thousands and thousands of faithful who enter this sacred place every day," Supreme Knight Kelly said. "Cardinal Dolan, thank you for welcoming 'America's Parish Priest' into 'America's Parish Church.'"

Supreme Knight Kelly also addressed the many Knights in attendance, including the more than 650 who received the organization's Fourth Degree at the day's ceremony. "Thank you for your commitment to charity, unity, fraternity and above all, on this special day, for your pledge of patriotism," he said.

Supreme Knight Kelly also expressed gratitude to the renowned sculptor Chas Fagan.

"This inspiring depiction of Blessed Michael McGivney offering his priestly blessing will surely stand the test of time. And it will serve as a reminder to the millions who will see it each year of the faith and devotion that defined this unassuming parish priest."

On February 22, 1900, patriotism was added to the Knights of Columbus principles of charity, unity and fraternity. At a time of virulent anti-Catholicism, the Fourth Degree was established to demonstrate that a faithful Catholic can also be a good and loyal American citizen. Members of this Fourth Degree have the opportunity to participate in honor guards and programs that promote faithful citizenship. Today, nearly 370,000 Knights are members of the Fourth Degree in nearly 3,700 assemblies.

The new statue that was unveiled during the ceremony is sculptor Chas Fagan's second statue of Knights Founder Blessed Michael McGivney. The first was a marble statue, unveiled in 2023 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Among Fagan's many other recognizable works are the statue of St. John Paul II at the entrance of the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C., and the statue of President Ronald Reagan in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. Fagan also painted the portraits of Mother Teresa hung on the façade of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome for her canonization in 2016, and of Father McGivney for his 2020 beatification in Hartford, Conn.

For more information about the Knights of Columbus, please visit kofc.org.

About the Knights of Columbus

In 1882, Blessed Michael McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus to serve the needs of a largely immigrant Catholic community. What began as a small fraternal benefit society has since grown into the world's premier lay Catholic men's organization, with more than 2.1 million members in over 16,800 local councils. As members of one of the world's leading international charitable organizations, Knights around the world donated more than 47 million service hours and over \$190 million for worthy causes in their communities in 2023. The Knights of Columbus also offers a range of life insurance products to members and their families. Knights of Columbus Insurance currently has more than \$123 billion* of life insurance in force. In addition, the organization offers investment services in accord with Catholic social teaching through its wholly owned subsidiary, Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, which holds more than \$29 billion** in assets under management. Based on the founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity, the Knights of Columbus is committed to strengthening Catholic families and parishes, and to practicing faith in action through service to all in need. To learn more or to join the Knights of Columbus, please visit kofc.org/join.

*As of December 31, 2024

**As of November 30, 2024

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