



News Release

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Contact: communicationsdept@kofc.org

Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly Encourages Knights of Columbus to Remain ‘On Mission’ at 142nd Supreme Convention

*Announces launch of a new pilgrim icon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus;
Knights’ delegates elect two new members to Board of Directors*

Québec City — The Knights of Columbus 142nd Supreme Convention continued this week as Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly encouraged the more than 2,500 Knights and their families, members of the Catholic hierarchy and special guests in attendance to remain on mission by striving to build up families, parishes and communities that are centered on Christ — a mission given to the Knights by Christ through the vision of their founder, Blessed Michael McGivney.

“There is no greater task,” said Supreme Knight Kelly in his opening address, in which he reported on the achievements of the Catholic fraternal organization over the past year. “It requires sacrifice and sometimes even suffering. But that’s what it means to be a disciple. That’s what it means to be on mission.”

Supreme Knight Kelly praised the convention’s host province, Québec, noting this year marks the 350th anniversary of the church in Québec. In fact, Québec is the cradle of the Catholic faith in North America, north of Mexico, once covering a territory that today has more than 150 dioceses. Moreover, Québec held a special place in the heart of Blessed Michael McGivney, who studied for the priesthood in the cities of Saint-Hyacinthe and Montreal.

Growing the Knights

Supreme Knight Kelly reminded the Knights that in these challenging times, the Order’s mission matters more than ever. “The days of easy faith are over,” he said.

Today’s Knights must have “the zeal of Father McGivney,” he continued, to build the next generation of Catholic men by growing the organization and forming Catholic men in faith and virtue, so they’re prepared to serve as missionary disciples. And he applauded their historic progress in the past year.

The Knights of Columbus now has more than 2.1 million members worldwide, and last year alone, more than 92,000 men joined the Knights — one of its best years of growth in a century.

This includes a record number of Hispanic men, who are critical to the future of the Catholic Church, since over half of young American Catholics are now Hispanic.

A Witness to Charity

Supreme Knight Kelly then reminded the assembled Knights that together they can follow the founding mission established by Blessed Michael McGivney by building communities that reflect God's love, especially through their witness to charity. Last year, Knights worldwide spent over 47 million volunteer hours serving others and donated more than \$190 million to those in need.

A highlight of the Knights' many charitable efforts includes their signature *Coats for Kids* program. In November 2023, Supreme Knight Kelly visited Annunciation Catholic School in Denver personally to give the one-millionth coat donated since the program began 14 years ago.

"But we are not done — today, I have a challenge," the Supreme Knight continued. "I'm calling on all of us to double that number in half the time. The Knights of Columbus will give 2 million coats to children in need by the year 2030!"

The Knights also continues to serve those who are persecuted for their faith, including Christians in the Middle East and Nigeria. In fact, last year, Nigerians accounted for 82% of Christians killed for their faith. In response to this crisis, Supreme Knight Kelly announced a new collaboration between the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria and Franciscan University of Steubenville. Through this collaboration, the Knights will fund the ongoing formation of priests and lay leaders to reach thousands of parishes and strengthen the faith of millions of Catholics in Africa.

In addition to fighting religious persecution, Supreme Knight Kelly noted that anti-Christian bigotry has become more aggressive and blatant around the world.

"A recent example was the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, where Our Lord and the Last Supper were outrageously mocked," Supreme Knight Kelly said. "The Olympics should be a celebration of God's gifts and the triumph of human achievement. But in Paris we saw blasphemy — a vile and intentional denigration of our faith."

"As Catholics, and as Knights, we are rightly angry," he continued. "But even more than that, we are resolved: We are Knights and we stand with Christ, our King — and we will not be silent!"

And over two years after Russia launched its war in Ukraine, more than 10,000 Knights in Ukraine and Poland continue to manage the largest relief effort in their history. Knights have distributed 8.5 million pounds of humanitarian aid to over 1.6 million refugees, most of whom are women and children, and recently announced a new partnership with the Protez Foundation to provide personally fitted prosthetics to the victims of war. In fact, their efforts have made such an impact that Russian authorities have officially banned the Knights of Columbus from the territory they occupy.

“Let me be clear,” Supreme Knight Kelly said. “Their ban is our badge of honor!”

Defending the Culture of Life

Supreme Knight Kelly also challenged Knights to continue the fight to defend life around the world.

“The reality is, we are not just fighting legal and policy battles. We are fighting what John Paul II described as a ‘culture of death’ and what Pope Francis has called a ‘throwaway culture.’”

Across the globe, Knights continue to follow Blessed Michael McGivney’s mission to protect mothers and their children.

In Washington, D.C., this year, the Knights co-hosted the second annual *Life Fest* with the Sisters of Life, which saw over 6,000 young people pray and rally for a future that respects the dignity of life at all stages. Later, thousands more gathered for the annual *March for Life*, which the Knights has co-sponsored for over 50 years.

Knights are working closely with vulnerable mothers and their unborn children as well. In 2023, Knights helped to place 135 ultrasound machines in pregnancy resource centers, bringing the total to over 1,800. And through the Aid and Support After Pregnancy (ASAP) program, Knights have donated more than \$11 million to pregnancy centers and maternity homes.

Knights of the Eucharist

When Supreme Knight Kelly was installed in office, he called on all Knights to be, first and foremost, Knights of the Eucharist.

“As Catholic families, the ultimate source of our strength is Jesus Christ,” he said. “And as Knights, we’re especially devoted to Christ in the Eucharist.”

Supreme Knight Kelly recalled his own personal experience of joining the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage on Memorial Day Weekend in New York City.

“We walked with pilgrims as they made their way from St. Patrick’s Cathedral through Manhattan. It was a truly amazing experience. Tourists knelt on the sidewalk and took videos. Waiters came outside and crossed themselves. Onlookers broke into spontaneous applause. And all the while, hundreds of pilgrims sang songs and bore witness to Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist. Even on the streets of New York City, it was clear — Jesus is alive, he’s real, and he’s changing hearts!”

On Mission

In conclusion, Supreme Knight Kelly stated that the duty of Catholics and of Knights is to witness to the hope that comes from Jesus Christ.

“Hope is at the heart of who we are,” he said. “It led Father McGivney and the first Knights to band together, trusting that through them, our Lord would do great things. Hope led them to provide for widows and orphans. Hope led them to strengthen the family and defend the Church.”

Stressing the theme of the convention, Supreme Knight Kelly continued, “And like those first Knights, we trust in the Living God who holds the future in his hands. He will guide us, as he did our forefathers. And like them, he calls us to go *on mission*.”

Supreme Knight Kelly Announces New Pilgrim Icon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

At the annual States Dinner, Supreme Knight Kelly noted that the Knights was celebrating not just one but two significant anniversaries this week. In addition to the founding of the Catholic Church in Québec, this year marks the 350th anniversary of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque receiving her visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1674.

“Our Lord reminded her of that ancient and beautiful devotion, and she shared that gift with the world,” said Supreme Knight Kelly. “As our Lord told her: ‘Behold this Heart which has so loved men that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself, in order to testify its love.’”

Mr. Kelly noted that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has announced that he’s writing a new document — a reflection on the Sacred Heart — that will be released next month.

“The Holy Father has said that he will reintroduce this devotion which is full of spiritual beauty, and he will offer it ‘to a world that seems to have lost its heart,’” said Mr. Kelly. “Our Holy Father’s encouragement, and his pastoral document, couldn’t be more timely.”

Mr. Kelly also announced that in early 2025, the Knights will help spread devotion to the Sacred Heart with the launch of a new pilgrim icon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For more than 40 years, the Knights’ Pilgrim Icon Program has brought sacred images to parishes around the world for prayer and devotion.

“In the heart of Christ, we see the heart of the Father,” said Supreme Knight Kelly. “And we ask Our Lord to help us make his heart our own, so that we may see and love in others what he sees and loves in us. That is what the world needs. And on the 350th anniversary of St. Margaret Mary’s visions, we will make this mission our own.”

Knights’ Delegates Elect Two New Members to Board of Directors

During the Knights’ business session Aug. 7, more than 530 delegates, representing over 2.1 million brother Knights around the world, elected two new members to the organization’s Board of Directors.

The new board members are Christopher A. Kolomjec from Michigan and Herbert W. Yang

from British Columbia, who will each serve a three-year term beginning Sept. 1, 2024, and ending on Aug. 31, 2027.

Christopher A. Kolomjec

Christopher A. Kolomjec, an attorney in private practice for the past 23 years, was Michigan state deputy from 2022-24. He previously served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Judge Advocate, retiring with the rank of Major. In addition, he was appointed a U.S. Special Assistant Attorney and worked as a federal prosecutor for four years.

A member of the Knights of Columbus for 28 years, he belongs to Assumption Grotto Council 13419 and Rev. Paul M. Onderbeke Assembly 1795, both in Detroit.

He and his wife, Julie, live in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, and have three adult children.

Herbert W. Yang

Herbert W. Yang, a professional engineer with more than 30 years of experience in the power distribution and motor control field, is the current British Columbia state deputy. After many years of working for outstanding companies such as General Electric, he started his own company in 2014 and continues to work with industry leaders.

Born in Manila, Philippines, he came as a teen with his family to British Columbia. He joined the Knights of Columbus in 1996 and belongs to Coquitlam Council 5540 and Bishop Durieu Assembly 30 in New Westminster, B.C.

He and his wife, Clara, live in Coquitlam and have two adult daughters.

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 approximately 50 million service hours and nearly \$185 million for worthy causes in their communities in 2022. The Knights of Columbus also offers a range of life insurance products to members and their families and was named by Forbes as one of America's Best Insurance Companies 2024 in the permanent life insurance category. 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 \$27 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, 2023

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