

Heralds of Hope



**Knights of
Columbus**

ANNUAL REPORT
of the SUPREME KNIGHT

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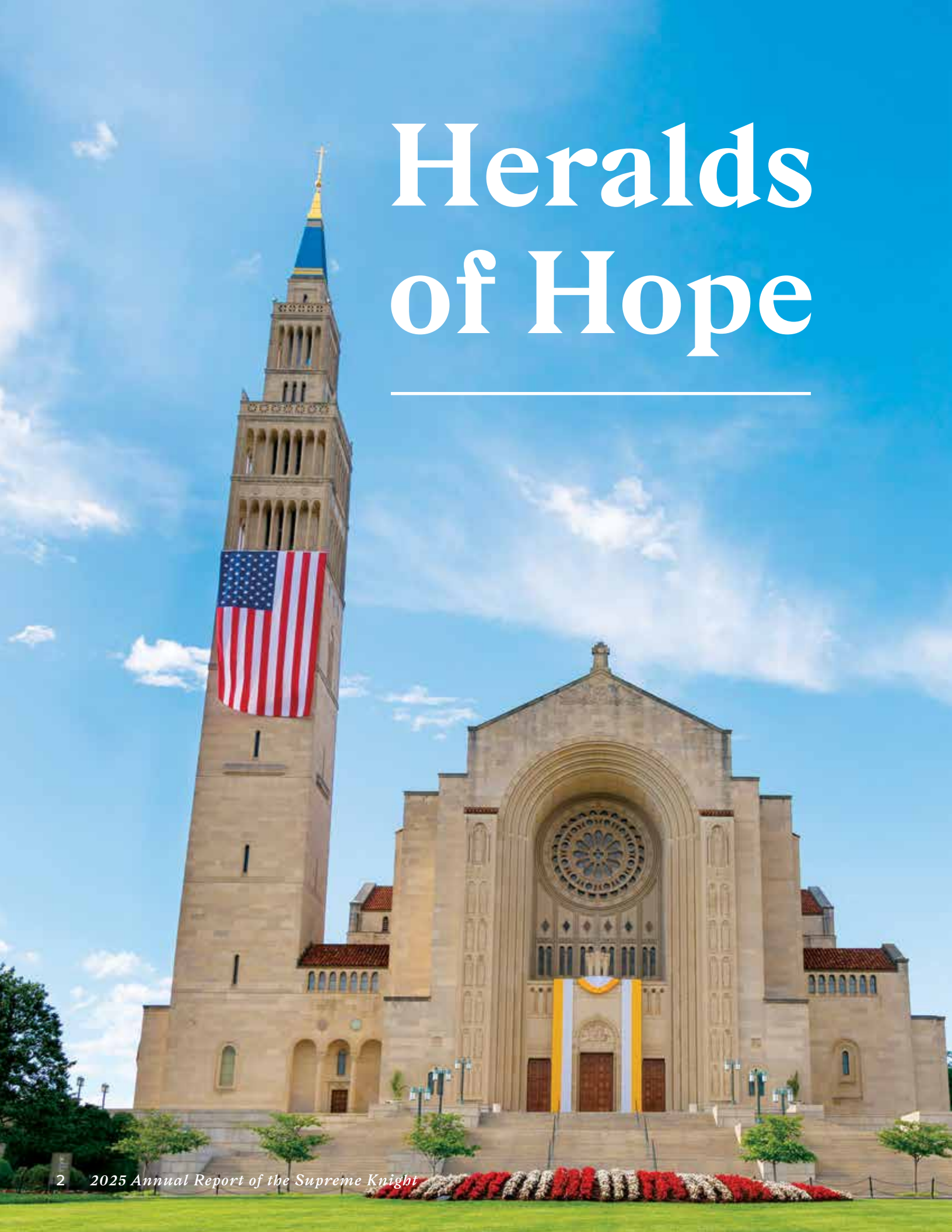
2025 Annual Report *of the* Supreme Knight



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Heralds of Hope



The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is pictured in Washington, D.C., in May 2025. A U.S. flag drapes the Knights Tower and Vatican colors adorn the entrance in celebration of the election of Pope Leo XIV. • Right: A statue of St. John Paul II by Chas Fagan welcomes visitors to the National Shrine which honors the late pontiff in Washington, D.C.

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies,
my brother Knights and families:
Welcome to our Supreme
Convention!

It's good to be back in Washington,
D.C. Our history in this city
stretches back nearly to our
founding. Our first council was
established here in 1897 — and
ever since, we have served both
God and country.

I think of our long-running
partnership with The Catholic
University of America. I think
of how we helped construct
the bell tower of the Basilica
of the National Shrine of the
Immaculate Conception. I think
of our strong support for the
Pontifical John Paul II Institute
for Studies on Marriage and
Family. And in a special way, I think of our landmark pastoral initiative in
our nation's capital — the Saint John Paul II National Shrine. In this city,
we have worked hard to serve the Church and strengthen the faith.

We've also put our faith into action, as Catholic citizens. Here in Washington,
we have defended religious freedom for more than a century. We've
marched for life for more than 50 years. And throughout our history,
we have proudly stood with those who serve in the Armed Forces of the
United States.

When I was state deputy of the District of Columbia, I had a front row seat
to so much of this work. And it gave me an even deeper appreciation for
all our work, around the world. The Knights of Columbus does amazing
things. And thanks to you, my brother Knights, last year was one of our
best years yet. You helped us advance in charity, unity, fraternity and
patriotism. And you gave witness to the hope that comes from Jesus Christ.

This is our mission — to be heralds of hope. To give hope to others
through our service and sacrifice. We lift up the family and the faith.
We lift up the vulnerable and the persecuted. And today, in a special way,
we lift up our voices in thanksgiving. Our Lord has given us a new Holy
Father to shepherd his Church. And the Knights of Columbus is proud to
stand with His Holiness Pope Leo XIV!



LEFT: Photo by Tim Dias/Courtesy of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception — TOP RIGHT: Photo by Chas Fagan

In Solidarity With Peter

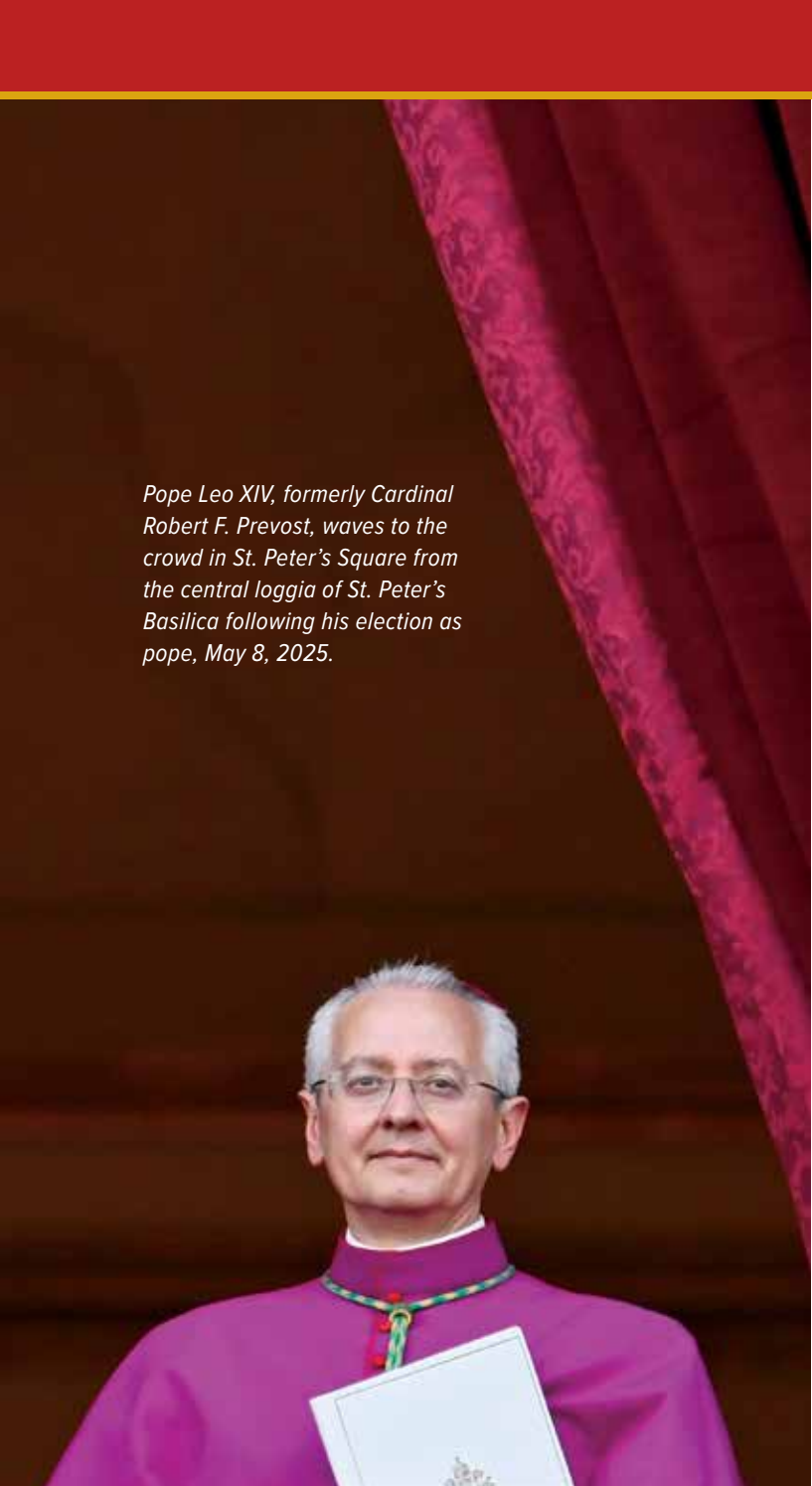


I had the privilege to be in Rome when the pope was elected on May 8. I was there representing our more than 2.1 million Knights. And as the conclave met inside the Sistine Chapel, I joined the crowd outside in St. Peter's Square.

I'll never forget the feeling of anticipation when white smoke appeared. Everyone wondered: Who would it be? And what would it mean for the Church we love? Then we heard the words that give hope to Catholics

around the world. *Habemus papam!* We have a pope! And what a gift our new Holy Father has been to the Church.

Pope Leo's words and actions have inspired all of us. In his first homily, he called Catholics to missionary outreach. And at his Mass of Inauguration, it felt like he was speaking directly to the Knights of Columbus. He centered his message on love and unity — and he urged us to build fraternity.



Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, waves to the crowd in St. Peter's Square from the central loggia of St. Peter's Basilica following his election as pope, May 8, 2025.



Charity, unity, fraternity — these are the principles that define us! And the Holy Father has called us to take them to everyone we encounter: to young men who are lonely and isolated; to families struggling to hand on the faith; and to victims of war and all who suffer. This is what missionary outreach means. And we will answer the Holy Father's call. Pope Leo, you have our prayers and loyalty. And on behalf of every Knight of Columbus, I pledge to you our unflinching unity!

CNS photo/Vatican Media — TOP RIGHT: Vatican Media



Pope Leo XIV, Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly and Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori at their first meeting at the Vatican, July 4, 2025.

Archbishop Lori and I had the privilege to deliver this message to Pope Leo in person last month. It was Independence Day — a fitting day for an audience with the first pope from the United States. And we presented him with a framed picture of the landing ship his father served on at Normandy. He was deeply touched as, together, we remembered his dad's service in World War II.

Archbishop Lori and I spoke with Pope Leo about our charitable work, and how we strengthen the faith of Catholic men. We focused on the principle of unity, which he and his fellow Augustinians share with us. And we discussed how the Knights of Columbus is a force for unity. It was clear that Pope Leo understands the Knights and all we do in service to the Church. And he is grateful for the work we do — for the work that you do.

Every Knight around the world can take pride in this. And those of us who are from the U.S. are especially proud that our pope is an American. He understands this country and our culture. And he knows the history that gave rise to the Knights of Columbus. We hear it in his words — and even in his name.



Left: Pope Leo XIV smiles during his inauguration Mass on May 18. He wore a chasuble once used by St. John Paul II, who was born exactly 105 years earlier, and carried the distinctive pastoral staff often used by him.

Opposite page: Gian Lorenzo Bernini's iconic baldacchino above the altar of St. Peter's Basilica is seen after its restoration, funded by the Knights of Columbus and undertaken by the Fabbrica di San Pietro in preparation for the Jubilee 2025.

And there's only one path forward. Pope Leo has said that now is the time to joyfully proclaim to the world: "Look to Christ! Come closer to him!" And the Knights of Columbus will do exactly that. In this world of deep confusion about the deepest questions, we will make clear in everything we do that Jesus Christ is the answer.

As we proclaim this truth, we stand in solidarity with the Vicar of Christ. To help bring the pope's message to the world, we donated a state-of-the-art broadcasting truck to the Holy See in time for the Jubilee Year. We also helped restore Bernini's iconic baldacchino and the Chair of St. Peter monument — two of the greatest masterpieces in the Vatican Basilica. And this is just the latest in the long history of our support for the successors of St. Peter. It's been a hallmark of the Knights for over a century.

In Father Michael McGivney's time, the Church was blessed with another Pope Leo. Amid the economic upheaval of the Industrial Revolution, Leo XIII called the Church to stand with the vulnerable and to defend the dignity of every human person. Father McGivney and the first Knights did just that. And I believe that their fidelity explains our remarkable growth.

Now Pope Leo XIV is calling us to action once again. Where his namesake responded to the modern world, he is responding to the postmodern world. Today, we're told that truth doesn't exist — we're told that human nature is whatever we decide it is, and that faith itself is irrelevant.

But these are lies — and lies have consequences. You can see it in the suffering and division all around us.

The election of Pope Leo has filled us with joy. But even as we celebrate him, we also give thanks for his predecessor. Pope Francis was a great friend to the Knights of Columbus. The supreme chaplain and I attended his funeral, to pay our respects on behalf of every Knight.

Pope Francis was a powerful witness to charity. And when he summoned the Church to the peripheries, he led by example — like a good father. His love for the poor and the sick was extraordinary. Who can forget the moment, in the early days of his papacy, when he embraced a severely disfigured man in St. Peter's Square? Or when he celebrated his 80th birthday by sharing breakfast with the homeless? He did what our world so often refuses to do. And the world watched, with admiration.



Pope Francis led the Church with the heart of a father. And the Knights of Columbus followed his example. He inspired our outreach to the Indigenous communities of Canada, the United States and the Philippines. And he encouraged our charity around the world. In my meetings with Pope Francis, he would always express his gratitude for the Knights. He especially praised our humanitarian work in Ukraine, as well as our efforts to combat human trafficking.

And for our part, the Knights of Columbus will always be grateful to Pope Francis for approving our founder's beatification. He personally admired Father McGivney's closeness to his people. In fact, he once told me that "we need more priests like Father McGivney."

Pope Francis has gone home to the Lord. And we will honor him through our continued service to the needy and the vulnerable. He truly was a Pope of Charity. And so, with grateful hearts, I ask you to join me in paying tribute to Pope Francis.



Top: Pope Francis pauses in prayer before knocking on the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica Dec. 24, 2024, to open it and inaugurate the Jubilee Year 2025. • **Below:** Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly presents Pope Francis with a first-class relic of Blessed Michael McGivney during a private audience on Oct. 25, 2021. The Mass of Beatification had taken place one year earlier, on Oct. 31, 2020, following the Holy Father's approval of a miracle attributed to Father McGivney's intercession.



TOP: CNS photo/Vatican Media — BOTTOM: L'Osservatore Romano photo — OPPOSITE PAGE: Photo by Paul Haring

Hope & Charity

If there's a word that summed up the message of Pope Francis, it's hope. He gave hope to the world in the depths of the pandemic. He gave hope to the poor and the persecuted. And he gave the entire Church the Jubilee Year of Hope.

In December, we saw Pope Francis open the Holy Doors. And we heard him proclaim that "Hope is not dead; hope is alive and it embraces our lives forever. Hope does not disappoint!"

Pope Francis often reminded us that true hope is much more than optimism. True hope is based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and his victory over sin and death.

This is the hope that guides the Knights of Columbus — and we share it through our charity. We don't merely volunteer. We see the face of Christ in those we serve. And we sacrifice for them because that's what Jesus did for us.

This hope in Christ inspired Father McGivney and the first Knights to put their faith into action. And 143 years later, we have taken our mission to heights they could not have imagined. Last year, we dedicated

48 million hours to serving others. And our brother Knights donated a record-breaking \$197 million to those in need.

Behind these numbers are countless acts of quiet service. Through Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids, we've now given more than 1.6 million winter jackets to children in need. And we just set a new record for the most coats given in a single year.

We continue to support people with intellectual disabilities through our work with Special Olympics. The world too often denies their dignity, but they are made in the image and likeness of God. Last year, we gave nearly \$5 million to advance this truth. And even more importantly, we provided nearly half a million hours of volunteer service. At competitions in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and beyond, the Knights were there — as we always will be.

One of our oldest charitable programs is our support for blood drives. We've sponsored them for over 90 years. And last year, donors gave more than 260,000 pints of blood at K of C blood drives. Thousands of Knights helped make this possible, but I'd like to call out one Canadian Knight in particular. He gave his first blood donation more than 40 years ago. And this year, he donated for the 200th time. When we asked him why, he said, "I do it because I can — and I'll just keep doing it till I can't." Lawrence Beneteau, thank you for your incredible generosity!



Left: Nelson Guzman (left), a member of Todos Los Santos Council 38 in Bridgeport, Conn., and Steve Trifone, a member of Santa Fe Council 2978 in Cheshire, help Amahle, 7, choose a winter coat during a Coats for Kids distribution at All Saints Parish in Waterbury. Connecticut Knights, family members and other volunteers distributed around 600 coats during the event, which was sponsored by Sheridan Council 24 in Waterbury.



A woman and her caretaker leave St. Stephen Church in Yola, Nigeria, after receiving a wheelchair from the Knights of Columbus during a March 4 distribution at a camp for internally displaced people in Adamawa State.

Photo by Afolabi Salunde

The Global Wheelchair Mission continues to grow. We have now donated more than 158,000 wheelchairs, including a record of more than 19,000 just last year. We delivered nearly 300 to Nigeria, for Christians who have endured violence and persecution for their faith. We aren't just delivering the gift of mobility. We're giving hope to those who desperately need it.

And we're doing the same in Ukraine. In its brutal war of aggression, Russia is deliberately targeting Ukrainian civilians. The constant missile attacks have killed thousands, and have injured and disabled even more. Many have lost their limbs. So we've teamed up with the Protez Foundation to donate prosthetics.

A young Ukrainian woman named Tetiana Sahaidak lost her foot in a missile attack. Now, all she wants is to return to the life she led before. And with our help, she's on her way to do just that. She's traveling to Minnesota this week to receive her prosthetic foot. Tetiana, your courage and resilience are an inspiration!

We pray for an end to the war in Ukraine. But so long as the war continues, we'll be there for those who suffer. We're still bringing emergency supplies to refugees through our K of C Charity Convoys. And our K of C Mercy Centers are still serving those who've lost everything. In both these efforts, our Ukrainian and Polish Knights have done extraordinary work. They have shown heroic charity.

As a sign of our enduring support, Archbishop Lori visited Ukraine again last year. He prayed at the site of the Bucha massacre, where hundreds of civilians were brutally murdered, including many children. He also met with a group of widows and orphans, and he gave coats to the children of fallen soldiers.

Before he left, the supreme chaplain delivered a message that bears repeating. He said, "This war may try to destroy your homes, your communities and your peace, but it cannot destroy your identity as a temple of the living God. You are his people, and he walks with you... every step of this difficult journey."



Poland State Deputy Marek Ziętek (left) and Protez Foundation staff gather Feb. 8, 2025, with Ukrainian amputees during a send-off event at the Knights of Columbus Mercy Center in Warsaw, Poland.

Today, I echo Archbishop Lori's words — especially to the Ukrainian bishops and priests who are with us. The Knights of Columbus will continue to walk with you and all the people of Ukraine — every step of the way.

We pray for peace for the people of Ukraine. And we pray for the people of Israel and Gaza, as well. It was heartbreaking to learn of the tragedy at Holy Family Parish in Gaza. Three innocent people were killed, and others were seriously wounded. Pope Leo expressed his profound sorrow at the loss of life.

Holy Family Parish is part of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which we have supported for more than 20 years through our Pacem in Terris Fund. Cardinal Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch, recently thanked us for our “unwavering support.” The Knights of Columbus will continue to work and pray for peace and justice in the Middle East.

We're putting our faith into action in the Holy Land. And we do the same in the wake of natural disasters around the world.

At this very moment, we are responding to the devastating flash flood that swept through Texas. Hundreds of families lost their loved ones — and one brother Knight tragically lost both his parents and his two young daughters. We pray for them, and for all who have perished. And for the devastated communities, we're on the ground to help them rebuild.

The Texas flood is just one of the many disasters we've responded to over the past year. When Hurricane Helene caused widespread destruction in September, Knights were quickly on the scene. From Florida to North Carolina to Tennessee, we gave shelter to the homeless, as well as food and clothing to those who lost everything. And when Hurricane Milton hit Florida



Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori pauses on Yablunska Street in Bucha, Ukraine, during his visit, Oct. 19, 2024, to pray for eight men executed by Russian forces during the early days of the war.

Photo by Andrii Gorb



Above: Florida Knights gather for a Nov. 9, 2024, workday at Pinellas Hope and Health Center and Medical Respite in Pinellas, Fla., where they constructed tent platforms at a homeless shelter.

• **Left:** Destroyed homes are seen in Altadena, Calif., Jan. 17, 2025, in the aftermath of the Eaton Fire, which began Jan. 7. The Eaton Fire burned more than 14,000 acres and destroyed over 7,000 structures.



and Georgia less than a month later, Knights were just as quick to respond. To this day, we're helping rebuild those shattered communities, and we will be there until the job is done.

The same is true in California. The wildfires in January devastated Los Angeles, and they ultimately destroyed an area that's bigger than Washington, D.C. Thousands of families had to flee. But even as the fires raged, the Knights arrived with truckloads of supplies. And they helped find homes for those who had lost theirs.

One story from the wildfires stands out. In Altadena, a Knight and his family fled their home as the flames advanced. When the smoke finally cleared, they went back to see what was left. Everything was gone — everything except a statue of the Blessed Mother. When they saw it, they were so moved that the whole family sang the *Regina Caeli*. Someone took a video that went viral — and millions of people witnessed that family's faith and hope.

There are many stories of our brother Knights doing inspiring work in response to the wildfires. But we also found inspiration in the Pacific Palisades. A few days after the fires destroyed almost the entire city, the local fire chief discovered something in the ruins of Corpus Christi parish. It was the tabernacle — and amazingly, it was still intact. So Mark Padilla and his son began a unique Eucharistic procession. These brother Knights escorted our Lord, still present in that tabernacle, to the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

Journey to the Philippines



Father Matthieu Dauchez, director of the Tulay Ng Kabataan Foundation, guides the Knights of Columbus delegation through a shanty town called Barangay Aroma. The centers there operated by the TNK Foundation — including a child daycare facility named for Mother Teresa — are like oases within a desert of extreme poverty.

Whether it's rebuilding communities after disaster or giving coats to kids, our charitable work spans the globe. And no one donates more time to charity than our Knights in the Philippines. Last August, Archbishop Lori and I traveled to Metro Manila and Cebu City to thank them in person.

What we saw was unforgettable. Every day, Filipino Knights assist people in dire need. In Manila, we were privileged to serve alongside Knights who run a soup kitchen. They feed hundreds of people daily. Rarely have I seen such poverty — such need. But Filipino Knights meet that need, day after day, throughout their nation. They are champions of charity. And on behalf of the entire Order, I honor and thank our more than 590,000 Filipino Knights. *Salamat!*

One of our most meaningful experiences happened at a place we never imagined we'd find ourselves — in a giant landfill. It's a heartbreaking place, because

hundreds of children call it home. Many have been abandoned, and they scavenge the garbage to survive.

Our guide that day was Father Matthieu Dauchez. A native of France, he has worked in the Quezon City slums for 27 years, and his foundation runs a daycare where those children get basic schooling. His ultimate goal is to help them escape that garbage dump forever.

As Father Matthieu guided us through the slum, we mentioned that he had brought us to the peripheries. Father Matthieu stopped and looked at the desperation around us. Then he turned to us and said, "This isn't the peripheries... this is beyond the peripheries." But that's where Filipino Knights go every day — to the places and people who need help the most.

Filipino Knights are also leaders in the fight against human trafficking. For several years, they've partnered

with the Arise Foundation to run a national campaign called Guardians of Dignity. Knights are training people across the Philippines to recognize the signs of trafficking — and to help stop it.

Archbishop Lori, Vanessa and I had the chance to meet privately with several young survivors. Their stories broke our hearts — but nothing could break their spirits. And their courage strengthened our resolve. These women and children deserve our help. And the Knights of Columbus will be there for them.

One reason Filipino Knights do so much is because they're blessed with inspiring servant leaders. I presented our St. Michael Award to one of them, Justice Jose Reyes Jr., at a national ceremony in Manila. He's a retired justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines. And he served with distinction as Luzon North Deputy and on our Board of Directors.

The Philippines can seem like a world away, but there's a bond between that country and this one. That bond is personified by two American missionary priests — both brother Knights.

Msgr. Aloysius Schwartz originally hailed from Washington, D.C. He founded the Sisters of Mary of Banneux in the Philippines, and that order now educates more than 20,000 children from poor families. Together with the Apostolic Nuncio, the Supreme Chaplain and I went to the Girlstown boarding school in Cavite. We were welcomed by 3,000 students. And all of them thanked the Knights of Columbus.

Much of our impact in the Philippines can be credited to another priest — Father George Willmann, S.J. For his tireless efforts to grow the Order, he is rightly called the “Father of the Knights of Columbus in the Philippines.” And 10 years ago, the Church recognized him as a Servant of God.

We join Filipino Knights in praying for his cause of canonization. May Father George Willmann follow Blessed Michael McGivney on the road to sainthood!



From top: Supreme Knight Kelly thanks Girlstown students for the cultural performance they put on for Knights of Columbus leaders at the school in Cavite, Silang. • Archbishop Lori blesses victim-survivors of human trafficking after hearing about their experiences during a visit to the Bidlisiw Foundation office in Mandaue City, Cebu, on Aug. 26, 2024. • Servant of God Father George Willmann (left), a Jesuit priest and fraternal pioneer who helped the Order spread throughout the Philippines. • Venerable Msgr. Aloysius Schwartz, a U.S.-born priest and member of the Knights who spent almost his entire priesthood ministering in Asia, founded the Sisters of Mary, which offers free educational and vocational training to underprivileged children around the world, including at the Girlstown boarding school near Manila.

Culture of Life

Around the world, Knights are known for defending unborn children and their mothers.

Earlier this year, just a mile from here, I joined thousands of Knights at the March for Life. It's always inspiring, but this year, something new struck me. Washington, D.C., is a place that prides itself on power. Yet on a cold winter morning, year after year, this city is confronted by an even more powerful truth. Unborn children are human beings — and it's wrong to deny their right to life.

For more than 12 years, the March for Life was led by the incomparable Jeanne Mancini. She's been a great friend and an even greater leader in the pro-life movement. Earlier this year, Jeanne passed the torch to Jennie Bradley Lichter, and I am grateful to them both for their courageous leadership.

Everyone who's been to a March for Life knows that our movement is young and vibrant. And before this year's march, thousands of young people came together at our third annual Life Fest, which we hosted with the Sisters of Life and the Diocese of Arlington. This event proves that no matter what the media says, the cause of life is marching forward.

It's true that Big Abortion has won some victories at the ballot box. It's been hard to watch. But last year, we won a key victory in Florida. Radical activists tried to roll back the state's heartbeat law. But on Election Day, life prevailed. And since that law went into effect, abortions in Florida have fallen by more than 40%.

This is real pro-life progress. Now, more than a dozen states protect life from the moment a baby's heart begins to beat — including Florida and Texas, two of the biggest states in America. And all told, nearly half of states have taken steps to limit abortion, saving thousands of lives each year.



Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly speaks at the Connecticut March for Life at the State Capitol in Hartford on March 19, the feast of St. Joseph.

But the fight is far from over. The abortion lobby will keep pushing ballot measures in the states. And when they do, we will push back. And we will continue to push forward here in Washington. We know it can seem like an uphill battle. But as our polling shows, a strong majority of Americans support real limits on abortion. And the Knights of Columbus will never back down. We will fight for life for as long as it takes!

Pro-life laws are urgently needed. But at the end of the day, laws alone won't build a culture of life. The most important thing we can do right now is redouble our support for mothers and children.

For decades, councils across the country have helped pregnancy resource centers. But in recent years, we've stepped up our efforts. In Iowa, Carroll Council 780 took the initiative to establish a new pregnancy center. And across the nation, we're doing more than ever through ASAP — Aid and Support After Pregnancy.



Above: Members of Phil Sheridan Council 2104 in Sheridan, Wyo., and staff from the Legacy Pregnancy Center unload a truckload of diapers and other baby supplies that the Knights collected from parishioners of Holy Name Church. The council is a frequent supporter of the center, donating more than \$5,200 in cash and supplies over the past year, with an additional donation of \$400 through the ASAP (Aid and Support After Pregnancy) program.

• **Left:** Angela Clark (foreground, left), executive director of A Best Choice Mobile Ultrasound Pregnancy and Resource Center in Northern Virginia, and client Fabiola Rodriguez stand in front of the center's new mobile ultrasound van — which received the 2,000th ultrasound machine to be donated through the Order's Ultrasound Initiative.



We launched ASAP in anticipation of the end of *Roe v. Wade*. And we know why it's so important. A recent study showed that 60% of abortion-minded women say they'd choose life if they just had more material and emotional support. ASAP is our answer. We're helping give diapers and baby formula to moms who can't afford them, and pack-n-plays to families that need them. And we're even helping connect new parents with jobs and training to support their growing families. ASAP is meeting real needs.

Last year alone, we donated a new record of more than \$6 million to pregnancy resource centers. And all told, in just three years, we have now given more than \$17 million to help mothers and children.

Across the U.S., we're saving more lives than ever through our Ultrasound Initiative. We launched this program in 2009 with a simple goal: To save lives by showing parents their unborn children. That's the power of the ultrasound — and it's a game changer. It took us a decade to place a thousand. But just six years later, we've reached another milestone. We have now donated two thousand life-saving ultrasounds!

We reached that milestone by providing an ultrasound machine for a mobile pregnancy resource center not far from here. It will serve mothers in Northern Virginia and the D.C. metro area. And it's run by a center with an impressive track record of saving more than 200 babies.

Faith Formation

We will always support mothers and children. But we're also helping men step up and become the leaders that women and children deserve.

I delivered this message to the Connecticut March for Life on the feast of St. Joseph. Standing before the State Capitol in Hartford, I said that men are a major reason why abortion is so common. Too many men fail to respect women. And too many men abandon women once they're pregnant. They'd rather run than take responsibility. The truth is that too many men are acting like boys. But that's not what society needs. We don't need boys. Women need husbands. Children need fathers. And we all need men to act like men.

Father McGivney knew it, too. And he created the Knights of Columbus to give men a place to pursue greatness. More than 140 years later, we are still helping men grow as husbands and fathers. And now we're focused on reaching the next generation.

This is the reason we started *Cor*. The small-group setting gives men a place to embrace the mission for which they were made — the mission that God himself has uniquely given to them. *Cor* is a place to deepen our faith, together with friends and brother Knights. And it's our answer to the isolation and loss of purpose that so many men are struggling with today.

I recently heard from our state chaplains about the difference *Cor* is making. They said it's breathing new life into their parishes. And they told me that young men are drawn to it. One chaplain from Mexico said that *Cor* is bringing men back to the Church. And he described how it's helping them become better husbands and fathers. What's happening there is happening around the world — because *Cor* is meeting a real need.

I also spoke to the bishops of the United States about *Cor* at their annual meeting in Baltimore, and many expressed their strong support. They see what we see — that Catholic men need faith



Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori addresses Knights of Columbus chaplains from around the world during a State Chaplains meeting in the Blessed Michael McGivney Pilgrimage Center in New Haven, Conn., on June 5. Also pictured are Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly and Dominican Father Jonathan Kalisch, director of chaplains and spiritual development.

Photo by Tamino Petelsak



Carrying the flags of their country, the Vatican and the Order, Knights in France embark on an 8-mile procession across the shallow bay between the Normandy coast and Mont Saint-Michel, home to the Catholic abbey of the same name. About 150 Knights attended a jurisdiction-wide retreat at Mont Saint-Michel that included prayer, talks and fraternity.

formation. And they see that *Cor* can make a real difference in their dioceses. This time last year, some 650 councils had started *Cor*. But today, it's more than 5,000 councils. My brother Knights, thank you for making *Cor* one of the fastest-growing initiatives in the history of the Knights of Columbus!

I urge every council to take up *Cor*. We have a wealth of material that can help it succeed in your parish. Thanks to our partnership with the Augustine Institute, we have a dedicated section on Formed, their popular streaming service. We also have our *Men of the Word* Bible study and many other resources from our Catholic Information Service. This year, we released a video series on the virtues of Christian leadership to help men imitate the greatest leader in history, Jesus Christ. And next year, we'll launch our newest series, called *Into the Breach: The Dignity*

of Work. It will build on the success of our previous videos, and it will build up men as providers and leaders. *Cor* is a gateway for men who want to find meaning and mission. And it opens the door to everything we do.

In many countries, Knights embrace the tradition of pilgrimage. For 65 years, thousands of K of C pilgrims have carried the Silver Rose in procession from Canada, through the United States to Mexico. In Poland, more than 1,000 Knights and their families gather each year in Jasna Góra to invoke Our Lady of Częstochowa. And in France, the Knights led a pilgrimage of more than 150 men to Mont Saint-Michel last year. This famous abbey, dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, stands on an island just off the coast of Normandy. Our French Knights walked across the bay at low tide, giving glory to God every step of the way.

One of our most cherished initiatives is our Pilgrim Icon Program. This year marks the 350th anniversary of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. So in January, we launched a new pilgrim icon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Devotion to the Sacred Heart was dear to Father McGivney. And Pope Francis dedicated his last encyclical to the heart of Christ. Our new pilgrim icon has been the focal point of more than 5,000 prayer services so far, which have gathered over half a million people. I urge every Knight to join this effort. And I encourage you to consecrate your family and your home to the Sacred Heart. This devotion speaks to the timeless promise that God has made to us. In the Sacred Heart, we see the limitless love of Jesus Christ, and we find the courage to love with the heart of a father.

We also need to deepen our devotion to the Eucharist. In the United States, the National Eucharistic Revival officially ended this past June. It was a resounding success, and tens of thousands of Knights were proud to take part in processions from coast to coast. As Knights of the Eucharist, we will carry the Revival's mission forward. Our councils will continue to organize Eucharistic processions and adoration — not only in the United States, but around the world.

All our faith programs help Knights grow closer to God. And they help us share our faith with others. This is the heart of who we are — we advance the Church's missionary witness. And there are signs that

this witness is bearing fruit. After years of decline, conversions are now actually rising in many dioceses. Last year, many saw growth of 30 to 70% — and some had even more. And this isn't just happening in the United States. Adult baptisms in France have more than doubled in the last decade. And across Europe, there are signs of a resurgence of faith.

Many of these converts are young men.

And that makes sense. To paraphrase Cardinal Dolan, young men don't want a question mark — they want an exclamation point. And they can find that exclamation point in the Knights of Columbus — a place where they can pursue truth and virtue — a band of brothers where iron sharpens iron.

In this work, our priests are essential partners, and we serve them in all our parishes. We're also committed to the next generation of priests and religious. Forty-four years ago, we launched our signature vocations program — RSVP. And since then, it's helped more than

150,000 men and women answer God's call to the priesthood and religious life. And this past year, we reached a historic milestone. Thanks to the generosity of U.S. and Canadian Knights, we've now given more than \$100 million to support our future priests and religious!

Our college councils play a unique role in promoting vocations. They encourage young men to devote their lives to Christ and his Church. And the District of



Above: Pompeo Batoni's 1767 painting of the Sacred Heart, located in the Church of the Gesù in Rome, is seen after its restoration. The Order funded the restoration of the painting and the chapel in which it is venerated to mark the 350th anniversary of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque's visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Columbia is a case in point. Here, we have three vibrant college councils — at Georgetown, George Washington, and Catholic University. All told, these councils have fostered more than forty vocations. And this year's Blessed Michael McGivney Medalist not only joined the Knights as a Charter Member at CUA, but he has now spent nearly two decades promoting vocations among College Knights. Please join me in thanking and congratulating Pallottine Father Frank Donio!

We support our clergy and religious around the world. And in Nigeria, the bishops told us that faith formation is their greatest need amid persecution. We're now helping to train Nigerian priests, religious and catechists, in partnership with the Franciscan University of Steubenville. And we're on track to establish a catechetical institute in Nigeria's capital

next year. I'm grateful to all our friends at Franciscan University — especially its president, Father Dave Pivonka — for supporting the persecuted Church in Nigeria.

We're also joined today by more than 50 bishops from around the world. We are grateful for their leadership and support in so many ways. But I'd like to recognize one in particular, from just up the road in Baltimore.

He began his ministry as a priest and bishop right here in the Archdiocese of Washington. And this year he celebrates two anniversaries. He has now been a bishop for 30 years — and he's been our supreme chaplain for 20 years. Archbishop William Lori — congratulations and thank you for all you do for the Knights of Columbus!



Escorted by a Fourth Degree honor guard, Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso carries the monstrance as he leads the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage during its stop in El Paso on June 10.

Membership

Over the last year, we welcomed more than 96,000 new Knights of Columbus. And all told, we now have more than 2.1 million members. They're spread across nearly 17,000 councils in North America, Europe and Asia.

I'm grateful to those of you who invited someone to join last year. And I renew my call for every Knight to invite two men to join in the year ahead.

In the United States, we must especially reach Hispanic men. They are essential to the future of the Church. And they have a natural home in the Knights of Columbus.

The same is true for the next generation, and that's why we continue to grow on campus. We now have over 8,000 Knights in 146 college councils. And their faith was on full display at the Army-Navy game last December. At halftime, Knights from both

academies gathered to pray the rosary. They came from Msgr. Cornelius George O'Keefe Council 8250 at West Point, and Commodore Barry Council 14534 at Annapolis. As a retired Naval officer, and as someone who joined the Order as a college Knight, I was proud of their witness. And, just for the record, I was also proud that Navy won.

We are growing across the world — including in some of our oldest jurisdictions. It has now been 125 years since the Knights of Columbus was established in Ontario, with Ottawa Council 485. To celebrate this milestone, Ontario Knights restored the graves of their past leaders. And I'm grateful for the ongoing commitment of all our Canadian Knights.

Our global growth shows the enduring power of Father McGivney's vision. And we have a duty to keep up the momentum.



Supreme Master Michael McCusker (foreground, third from right), cadets, midshipmen and others pray the rosary during halftime of the annual Army-Navy football game Dec. 14. The effort was organized by college Knights at the U.S. Military Academy and the U.S. Naval Academy.

Photo by Paul Haring

Insurance & Investments

We also want to grow our financial protection for Catholic families. In the 1880s, our growth helped us support widows and orphans. And we recently enhanced the fraternal benefits our members receive just for joining the Knights. After nearly a century and a half, we are still true to the roots that have enabled us to protect generations of K of C families.

We've expanded our portfolio of insurance products to give families even better protection. The Knights of Columbus now provides more than \$123 billion of life insurance. Catholic families know we'll be there when they need us. And last year, A.M. Best and Standard & Poor's reaffirmed our financial strength by awarding us superior ratings once again.

Insurance is the core of how we protect families from financial hardship. And a growing number of members and non-members alike now turn to us for investment services. So do many dioceses and religious orders. They entrust us to manage \$2.4 billion on their behalf, and it's plain to see why. We invest with integrity. And we are proud that Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors is fully aligned with Catholic teaching.

And the same is true of the Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund. This donor-advised fund can help anyone give generously while upholding our Catholic faith. KCCF has now granted more than \$147 million to worthy causes.

Charity is at the heart of our mission. Every policy and every product we sell helps us do more for others. Last Christmas, I received a note that drove this truth home. It came from an 83-year-old grandmother, who from the age of 4 to 16 was a resident at Guardian Angel Orphanage. And here's what she wrote: "My fondest memory was your wonderful organization at Christmas brightening the kids' lives



Knights of Columbus insurance agents and Supreme Council employees converse during the annual Field Agent Sales Conference, held July 16-18, near Dallas, Texas.

with a candy stocking and gift. ... Know that your work is eternally appreciated and makes the lives of those less fortunate so much better."

I shared this story with our K of C insurance agents earlier this year. Their hard work makes so much of our charity possible. They help us protect and serve Catholic families every single day. Please join me in thanking our more than 900 dedicated agents from across the United States and Canada.

**STANDARD
& POOR'S**



Patriotism



Fourth Degree Knights and 645 candidates stand in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City at the conclusion of the inaugural presentation of the revised Exemplification of Patriotism on Feb. 22 — the 125th anniversary of the Fourth Degree's founding.

So far, I've spoken about our work in charity, unity and fraternity. And we're just as committed to patriotism.

Washington, D.C., is a fitting place to reflect on our love of country. And this is also a fitting year. It's the 125th anniversary of the Fourth Degree. And last February, we celebrated that milestone where the Fourth Degree began — in New York City.

More than a thousand Sir Knights gathered in St. Patrick's Cathedral to mark this occasion. And we unveiled a revised ceremonial that's faithful to our history and tailored to our times.

The Fourth Degree wasn't the only thing we celebrated in St. Patrick's. That same day, we dedicated a statue of an exemplary priest and patriot — Father McGivney

Photo by Paul Haring

himself. It shows our founder offering his priestly blessing. And it will no doubt inspire the millions who visit St. Patrick's every year.

Our record of patriotism is long and proud. And it's worth recalling as the United States prepares to celebrate its 250th anniversary. The Knights have always called our fellow citizens to live up to the principles found in the Declaration of Independence. We stood for racial equality when few others dared. We defended religious liberty in the face of anti-Catholic bigotry. And 100 years ago this year, we funded the U.S. Supreme Court case that struck down state laws that would have banned Catholic schools. The Ku Klux Klan was behind those laws — and they denied the rights and dignity of Catholic children and their parents. But the Supreme Court said 'no!' — "The child is not the mere creature of the State."

This history is worth remembering, because history is now repeating itself. One hundred years later, radical activists are once again trying to indoctrinate our children in public schools. And the Order is still fighting this injustice. We strongly support the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which recently sued a Maryland school board on behalf of several parents. The board had refused to let them opt out their children from reading books that glorified gender ideology. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court — and in June, the court ruled that the school board was wrong. Religious liberty won again — and parents' rights have been restored!

Our patriotism has been just as powerful in other nations. I think of St. José María Robles Hurtado and all the Mexican Knights who stood for religious liberty during the violent persecution of the Church in the 1920s and 1930s. They refused to deny Christ — and they paid with their lives. It has now been 25 years since John Paul II canonized six of those Knights and 20 years since Pope Benedict beatified three more. To our brother Knights from Mexico — we join you in honoring the Mexican Martyrs. *Viva Cristo Rey!*

And in France, our patriotism was on full display. The world was stunned when a fire nearly destroyed



Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris is arrayed in light during the reopening celebration Dec. 7, 2024.

Notre-Dame Cathedral in 2019. We hoped and prayed that France would faithfully restore that national icon. That prayer was answered — and a French Knight helped make it possible. Jean-Baptiste Bonhoure oversaw the reconstruction of the nave, choir and belfries. And when the restored cathedral reopened in December, we all marveled at its beauty. To all our French Knights — congratulations on the rebirth of your national treasure, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame!

As patriots, we strongly support those who serve in uniform. Our 67 military councils serve thousands of Knights around the world.

We've also now given more than 700,000 copies of the *Armed with the Faith* prayer book to military personnel. And in May, we sponsored the latest Warriors to Lourdes pilgrimage. More than 250 wounded heroes and their families participated and prayed for healing. In all these efforts, we are honored to partner with Archbishop Timothy Broglio and the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.



Lewis Reid, a member of Bishop William G. Curlin Assembly 3158 in Concord, N.C., gives a patriotic salute in Salisbury National Cemetery Annex after speaking at the funeral of a fellow veteran, Oct. 3, 2024.

We support those who serve because they defend our families and our freedom. And we don't forget them when they've hung up the uniform. We continue to honor their service and sacrifice. Twenty-five years ago, the Fourth Degree raised more than half a million dollars to help build the national World War II Memorial, right here in Washington. And across the country, Fourth Degree honor guards are a common site at military funerals.

But when it comes to honoring fallen heroes, one Knight has gone above and beyond the call of duty. Sgt. Lewis Reid served in the United States Army. He retired in 1956, but that didn't mark the end of his service. He has spent more than 25,000 hours paying his respects to departed veterans. And even now, at 91 years young, Sgt. Reid attends as many as two or three funerals a day.

He often says the same stirring words: "Another veteran has been called to the high command. He's gone to meet

the greatest commander of all. We come to honor his memory." Sgt. Reid, thank you for your unwavering patriotism!

Sgt. Reid is one of tens of thousands of Knights who have served their country. And at this very moment, hundreds of Ukrainian Knights are fighting for their nation's survival.

It has now been three and a half years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. From the start, our brother Knights stepped forward to defend their country and their families. I went to Ukraine shortly after the war began to show our solidarity, and to support the refugees. And while I was there, several Knights asked me to establish the Patriotic Degree in Ukraine.

They were preparing to go to the frontlines. And they told me that, if they were going to die, they wanted to die as Fourth Degree Knights. I granted their request —

and more than 250 Ukrainian Knights have now joined the Patriotic Degree.

Ukrainian Knights remind us that patriotism matters in our time. And we believe that patriotism is even more important now than it was at the Fourth Degree's founding.

A hundred and twenty-five years ago, many Americans asked a simple yet misguided question. Could a Catholic really be a good citizen? The Knights of Columbus answered with action. From the home front to the battlefield, we proved that Catholics can serve this country with distinction. And we proved that Catholics can lead this country — when our brother Knight, John F. Kennedy, was elected president.

Knights have been patriots in all our countries. From Canada to Mexico, from Poland to the Philippines, we prove that good Catholics make good citizens. But times have changed, and now we're confronted by a different question. People are no longer asking if we *can* be patriots. They are asking if we *should* be patriots. In fact, they're asking if *anyone* should be a patriot.

We've all heard the arguments. They say that patriotism is just arrogant nationalism. They say it stands in the way of progress and peace. And we're even told that our countries don't deserve our love — that their mistakes make them unworthy of it.

But the Catholic Church teaches that patriotism is a virtue and a duty. It flows from a sense of gratitude — gratitude to God for the gifts he has given us, including the gift of our cultures and our communities. St. John Paul II taught us that loving your country is just as natural as loving your family. That means patriotism isn't an option. It's an obligation.

This is our task as we look to the next 125 years of the Fourth Degree. We will foster the good in our countries. We will actively work to make them better. And we will hand on our love of country to our children and our grandchildren. This is what a patriot does. And the Knights of Columbus will never apologize for our love of country!



From top: Marching behind a U.S. Marine Corps color guard, Fourth Degree Knights carry images of Pope Leo XIV and the Order's Sacred Heart pilgrim icon in procession during the annual Warriors to Lourdes pilgrimage co-sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. • Then-State Deputy Youriy Maletskiy (right) holds his Fourth Degree sword and a baldric featuring the Ukrainian national colors before Ukraine's first Fourth Degree exemplification May 27, 2023. Standing at left is then-District Deputy Myroslav Mazur, past grand knight of Andrey Sheptytsky Council 15804 in Ivano-Frankivsk.

Conclusion

Our patriotism brings hope to all our nations. The same is true of our charity, unity and fraternity. And as we look to the rest of this great Jubilee Year, our witness is only beginning.

The world is searching everywhere for hope — in science, in politics, in ideology. But the world will find it only in Jesus Christ, the author of hope. As Knights, we point the way to him. And as we move forward, we draw strength from our Lord — and from the heroes of our past.

It has now been five years since Father McGivney was declared “Blessed.” His beatification confirmed his personal holiness and heroic virtue. And it gave us hope that our founder will soon be numbered among the saints.

For us and for so many, Father McGivney is a source of hope. And one family can uniquely attest to this. Earlier this year, they faced a parent’s worst nightmare. Their toddler was playing outside and, tragically, fell into the family pool. And when his mother and father found him, they couldn’t find a pulse. They rushed to the hospital, fearing their precious boy was gone.

But he wasn’t. After 52 minutes of CPR — nearly an hour — the doctors finally heard a faint heartbeat. They stabilized him. But his body was so broken, they didn’t know if he’d survive. So the parents turned to God in prayer. And they also turned to Father McGivney. A priest brought them a first-class relic of our founder. And when the relic arrived, they immediately began a novena invoking the intercession of Blessed Michael.

Every day, they placed that relic on a different part of their son’s body. And every day brought more hope. They learned that his organs weren’t damaged beyond repair. They found that his lungs weren’t filled

with fluid. And against all odds, their son quickly regained his ability to eat and walk.


On the ninth and final day of their novena, their little boy was discharged from the hospital with a clean bill of health. His parents wrote to us, saying that they’ve “never felt such deep despair turn to such sincere joy.” They attribute his recovery “to the intercession of Blessed Father McGivney entirely.”

This is just one of several remarkable healings attributed to Father McGivney. And each one renews our hope. And we give thanks to Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate source of our hope. The Lord is at the center of all we do. And after 143 years, he continues to guide the Knights of Columbus. We have come further than Father McGivney ever imagined. But we’ve only gone where Christ has called us to go. Now he’s calling us to go even further. And we are ready.

Like every generation that came before us, we will move forward — in charity, unity and fraternity. We will serve our Lord by serving others. And we will sacrifice for them, like he did for us.

It is an honor to join all of you in this great work. Now let us put our faith into action once again — as heralds of hope in all we do. *Vivat Jesus!*

The world is searching everywhere for hope — in science, in politics, in ideology. But the world will find it only in Jesus Christ, the author of hope.



A bronze statue of Blessed Michael McGivney commissioned by the Supreme Council and gifted by the Fourth Degree is pictured at the St. Joseph altar of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.



*Video Message of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV
for the 143rd Supreme Convention
of the Knights of Columbus
August 5, 2025*

Dear friends,

I am pleased to greet all of you gathered in Washington, D.C., for the 143rd Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus. I also greet those who are participating virtually in these opening ceremonies.

You are meeting during the Jubilee Year of Hope, which encourages the Universal Church, and indeed the entire world, to reflect on this essential virtue, which Pope Francis described as “the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring” (*Spes Non Confundit*, 1). I’d like to reflect briefly with you on this important virtue.

As Catholics, we know that the source of our hope is Jesus Christ and he has sent his followers in every age to bring the good news of his saving Paschal Mystery to the entire world. The Church has always been called to be a sign of hope through the proclamation of the Gospel in words as well as in actions. In a particular way during this Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind.

Your founder, Blessed Michael McGivney, understood this well. He saw the many needs of immigrant Catholics and sought to bring relief to the poor and suffering through his faithful celebration of the sacraments as well as through fraternal assistance, fraternal assistance which continues on to this day.

This year’s Convention has the timely theme of “Heralds of Hope,” reminding all Knights of Columbus of the invitation to be signs of hope in your local communities, parishes, and families. In this regard, I commend your efforts to bring together men in your communities for prayer, formation, and fraternity, as well as the many charitable efforts of your local Councils throughout the world. In particular, your generous service to vulnerable populations, including the unborn, pregnant mothers, children, those who are less fortunate, and those affected by the scourge of war, brings hope and healing to many and continues the noble legacy of your founder.

With these brief words, I offer my good wishes for the work of the Supreme Convention, which I entrust to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and to the intercession of Blessed Michael McGivney. And may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

