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# Called to Creative Courage



Knights of  
Columbus®

ANNUAL REPORT of the SUPREME KNIGHT

139th Supreme Convention  
NEW HAVEN • 2021



# 2021 Annual Report *of the* Supreme Knight



Photo by Tamino Petelinšek

As I present my first annual report as supreme knight, I am filled with gratitude. It is a privilege to serve my brother Knights and the entire Order of the Knights of Columbus.

I am only here because of those who came before me. I am a third-generation Knight. My grandfather joined in 1915 before he left for World War I. My father, a naval officer, was a faithful member of our parish’s council. It was their example of fidelity and service that inspired me to become a college Knight in 1983.

After years of military and public service, I became increasingly involved at the local and state council level. I was inspired by my brother Knights in the District of Columbia and was honored to serve as their state deputy.

On the day I was elected supreme knight, I said that for the sake of the Order, I have given my all, and for the future of the Order, I will give still more. Like you, I draw on my love for Jesus Christ, his Church and the Knights of Columbus — and I am honored to serve with you.

Today, I will highlight our recent achievements in charity, unity and fraternity. And I will offer a vision of our continued rise, in courage and faith.

I wish we could meet in person, but for the second year in a row, we must gather virtually. Initially, we had hoped to hold this convention in Denver, but Colorado was still shut down when we had to finalize our plans. And while we cannot be together, the Knights of Columbus is already on the move.

From the United States to Ukraine; from the Philippines to France; from Canada to South Korea; from Mexico to Poland, the Knights of Columbus is marching forward. We are *leading* the way with service and sacrifice. We are *showing* the way through faith in action.

Make no mistake: Now is a time for Knights. The past 18 months have amplified old challenges and given rise to new ones. They face our families, our faith, and our culture as a whole.

My brother Knights, we are coming through one crisis, only to find that we face still more hurdles. Our mission is to meet them head-on — and overcome them — together.

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# Saint Joseph

Once again, the time has come for Knights of Columbus to put our faith into action. We must ask ourselves: What is the best way to do this?

I believe we can find our answer by looking at the lives of two men.

The first is St. Joseph. Last Dec. 8 marked the 150th anniversary of Joseph being named patron of the universal Church. To mark this occasion, Pope Francis declared a “Year of St. Joseph.” The Holy Father is calling our attention to the foster father of our Lord, for good reason. The world is in desperate need of men in the mold, and with the heart, of St. Joseph.

At the start of the year, the pope praised St. Joseph’s “creative courage” and called upon every Catholic to adopt this virtue. He said, “In the face of difficulty, we can either give up and walk away, or somehow engage with it.” He continued, “At times, difficulties bring out resources we did not even think we had” (*Patris Corde*, 5). St. Joseph is the proof.

My brother Knights, these words are meant for us. You and I are called to creative courage. Our duty, in these difficult times, is to be bold in faith, to be men of obedience and men of action — like St. Joseph before us.

The day I was installed as supreme knight, my first act was to consecrate my administration to St. Joseph. Then, standing in St. Mary’s Church, the place of our founding, I said that St. Joseph shows us how to “witness to the world.” He did this in two ways.

First, St. Joseph embraced his role as “Guardian of the Family.” He protected our Blessed Mother, Mary, and our Savior, Jesus Christ. He guided them through danger and kept them from harm’s way. We, too, must be guardians of the family — because Catholic families need defenders. In this time when the family faces many challenges and a hostile culture, we must do our part to help men build strong marriages and raise faithful children.



Second, St. Joseph served as “Guardian of the Truth.” The truth that Joseph protected had a name: Jesus Christ, who is the truth incarnate. We, too, must defend this truth. We live in a time of bigotry and intolerance. Key truths — about life, marriage, the nature of the family, and the meaning of

freedom — are increasingly denied and even vilified. Yet, this makes our commitment to truth all the more important. Now is the time to inspire our fellow Catholics to stand for what’s right.

St. Joseph is our guide. Let us pray for his intercession. And let us make his creative courage our own, for the sake of the family, and the truth.





Photo by Spirit Juice Studios



# Blessed Michael McGivney

The other man to whom we should look is Blessed Michael Joseph McGivney — our Founder. This is our first convention since his beatification. Where St. Joseph shows us *what* to do, Father McGivney shows us *how* to do it.

Like us, Blessed Michael McGivney lived in a time of families in crisis. He saw a hostile culture and a hurting Church. Yet, he did not shrink from these challenges. In the mold of St. Joseph, he stepped into the breach, with creative courage. Father McGivney listened to the Lord, fought for the family and the faith, and devoted himself to our Blessed Mother.

Ultimately, our Founder rallied the men of his parish to lead lives of charity, unity and fraternity. That was Father McGivney's answer. And it is still our answer today. Charity, unity and fraternity are the solutions to the most serious problems of our time.

Last October, the leaders of the Order gathered in Hartford's Cathedral of St. Joseph for the historic beatification Mass. There, we were graced by the presence of the boy whose healing was attributed to our Founder's intercession and officially declared a miracle. His name is Mikey Schachle, the son of a brother Knight — our general agent in Tennessee. Who could forget that moment when Mikey presented the relic of Father McGivney?

Pope Francis issued a special decree of beatification. He praised our Founder's "zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel" which "made him an outstanding witness of Christian solidarity and fraternal assistance." These words are a powerful validation of our Founder's vision and of our own work. They remind us that Father McGivney's life is an inspiration to the Church and to the world.

The beatification Mass was a great celebration. But it was not only that. It was just as much a call to action.

By elevating our Founder, the Lord has called us to greater depths of courage and faith, and greater heights of charity, unity and fraternity. In the beatification of Blessed Michael McGivney, the Lord has not only confirmed where the Knights have been, in the past. He is showing us where we must go, in the future.

We go forward confident that the intercession of our Founder is guiding us. And we go forward with renewed hope for his canonization. This is the first Supreme Convention where we call him *Blessed*. May the day soon come when we call him *Saint*.

# Worldwide Devotion to Father McGivney



*New Haven, U.S.A.*

Dominican Father Jonathan Kalisch (right), prior, Dominican Father John Paul Walker (center), pastor, and fellow Dominicans of St. Mary's Priory pray at the tomb of Blessed Michael McGivney in St. Mary's Church, the spiritual home of every Knight. This summer, the Dominicans celebrate the 135th anniversary of their presence in New Haven and the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Dominic. *(Photo by Tamino Petelinšek)*



*Mandaluyong, Philippines*

A billboard announcing the beatification is seen in Mandaluyong, Philippines. Filipino Knights sponsored similar billboards in various cities. *(Photo by William De Leon Jr.)*



*Mexico City, Mexico*

Mass of Thanksgiving, Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico City, Nov. 8. (Photo by Cristian Salvatierra)



*Ottawa, Canada*

A young family visits the Blessed Father Michael J. McGivney Honoris (place of honor) at St. Patrick's Basilica in Ottawa, Ontario. (Photo by Jake Wright)



*Częstochowa, Poland*

State Deputy Krzysztof Zuba (pictured above left) and other K of C leaders in Poland participate in the Nov. 8 Mass in the presence of the celebrated icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa. (Photo by Marian Sztajner)



*Paris, France*

With coronavirus restrictions preventing public celebrations in France, Knights watch the Mass of Beatification from home in Paris.



*Kyiv, Ukraine*

Ukrainian Knights join Archbishop Mieczysław Mokrzycki of Lviv, Bishop Vitaliy Kryvytskyi of Kyiv-Zhytomyr and Bishop Mykhaylo Bubniy, C.Ss.R., of Odessa following a Nov. 7 Mass in Kyiv. Archbishop Mokrzycki and Bishop Bubniy serve as State Chaplains for Latin and Ukrainian Greek Catholics, respectively.



*Seoul, South Korea*

Korean Knights gather Oct. 24 in anticipation of the beatification to pray with Bishop Francis Xavier Yu Soo-il of the Military Ordinariate of Korea at the ordinariate's prayer garden in Seoul.



Photo by Tamino Petelinšek

## Past Supreme Knight Carl Anderson

Father McGivney would be proud of the Order, and proud of us. What he began, we continue. What he gave us, we pass on.

The credit goes to all Knights, near and far. But one man deserves special mention for his heroic efforts. He is our past supreme knight, Carl Anderson.

Under his leadership, the Order grew dramatically in every measurable way. Our charitable donations soared by more than 60%. Insurance in force nearly tripled. Membership rose by nearly 400,000 and surpassed 2 million. And the Order expanded internationally for the first time in a century, to Europe and mainland Asia.

Our past supreme knight has also been a faithful steward of our Founder's cause. During his tenure, Father McGivney was declared both Venerable and Blessed. Few brother Knights have done more for our Founder. Few have done more for our Order.

The Knights of Columbus owes Past Supreme Knight Anderson a profound debt of gratitude. We will honor his contributions *in person* at next year's convention. But for now, on behalf of the millions of lives he touched, I thank our Worthy Past Supreme Knight Carl Anderson for his 20 years of faithful leadership.



# What It Means To Be a Knight

I am often asked what it means to be a Knight of Columbus. My answer is simple. A Knight lives by faith and leads by creative courage.

Faith and courage compel us to be men of charity.

It is often said “Where there’s a need, there’s a Knight.” And we prove it every day.

We feed hungry families, give coats to kids, protect the vulnerable from catastrophe, and defend the unborn. We rebuild churches in the Middle East and build homes for the homeless in our communities.

But we are not merely volunteers. We are servants of Christ who see his face in those we serve. Ours is a charity that evangelizes. Ours is a charity that brings people to faith, even as it springs from our own.

Faith and courage inspire us to be men of unity.

The Knights are known as the “strong right arm of the Catholic Church.” We have always been firmly united with the pope, the Vicar of Christ. We stand with our bishops, support our priests and aid in the formation of seminarians and religious.

We strengthen the family — the domestic church — helping men build strong marriages and raise faithful children. We strive to be the family’s first line of defense, encouraging men to embrace their vocation to heroic generosity and self-sacrifice.

We are called to protect the truth from those who deny it, and bring the truth to those who need it. Our fidelity to Christ is the source of our unity; we are proud to proclaim it, far and wide.

Finally, faith and courage bind us together in fraternity.

A Knight of Columbus is never alone. Each one of us stands side-by-side with brothers — in our parish and around the world. At a time when men are increasingly isolated, we offer solidarity. At a time when men are searching, we offer meaning and mission.

Fraternity amplifies all we do. It broadens our charity and deepens our unity. Alone, a man can do good works. Alongside his brother Knights, he can rise to greatness.

So, what does it mean to be a Knight?

It means a life of faith in action, a life of boldness in brotherhood, a life worth living. Catholic men are looking for nothing less. In the Knights of Columbus, they will find it.

# Leave No Neighbor Behind

There is no better proof of the Knights' witness of faith in action than the past 18 months. The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected crisis. Yet we rose to meet it, in extraordinary ways.

This was not our first pandemic. Father McGivney died during a pandemic less than a decade after our founding. A century ago, the Knights of Columbus confronted the Spanish Flu and emerged even stronger. This pandemic will be no different.

Our duty was clear from the start. When loss and suffering struck our parishes and communities, the Knights responded, with service and sacrifice.

We quickly rallied around a new initiative: Leave No Neighbor Behind. It focused our energy on the most urgent needs, such as feeding the hungry and caring for the vulnerable. As Knights, we know our neighbors are found far and wide. Wherever they are, we are there, too.

All told, under the banner of Leave No Neighbor Behind, Knights donated nearly \$7.7 million to community and parish projects, as well as 1.2 million pounds of food, and almost a quarter million pints of blood. We supported nearly 300,000 struggling parishioners and brother Knights.

Behind these numbers are stories — stories of Knights serving neighbors.

In Colorado, Council 16052 helped run a mobile food bank in the Rocky Mountains. Our brothers braved the worst winter weather to bring food to hungry families. Month after month, they showed up, putting the needs of others ahead of themselves.

In Ontario, Council 1387 assisted international college students who couldn't get home because of travel restrictions. Every week, like clockwork, Knights showed up with boxes of food and other supplies for neighbors they'd never met.

Across North America, the Knights rallied alongside the Little Sisters of the Poor. The Supreme Council and more than 20 jurisdictions provided food, water and medical supplies to help the sisters serve the elderly. As Bob Novak, grand knight of Council 4977, said, "We're big brothers to the Little Sisters."

Knights supported thousands of Indigenous families across the continent. We brought truckloads of food worth more than \$335,000 to the Acoma, Navajo and Zuni nations in New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. We did the same for native Hawaiian communities and remote First Nation villages in Canada.

Indigenous communities in far-distant locations were some of the hardest hit. The Supreme Council sent \$215,000 in life-saving oxygen supplies to the Amazon region, and another \$146,000 to build oxygen plants in Peru. Pope Francis has urged all Catholics to go to the peripheries. And the Knights of Columbus does just that.

Leave No Neighbor Behind will be seen as a proud chapter in our history. It is a case study in creative courage. The pandemic was a time of unprecedented need. The Knights of Columbus proved equal to the task.

A young man in Huancane, Peru, assists in the delivery of oxygen tanks donated by the Supreme Council.  
(Photo by ACI Prensa/Diego Lopez Marina)





Grand Knight Joe Pargola (left) and other members of Father Joseph D. Gallagher Council 3673 welcome parishioners back to Sunday Mass at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Morrisville, Penn., on May 9. *(Photo by Jeffrey Bruno)*

# COVID Recovery Program

We led with service and charity through the worst of the crisis. And we will continue to do so through our COVID Recovery Program.

This effort has the same urgency as Leave No Neighbor Behind. The pandemic caused parishes to close or severely limit Mass attendance. Many of our councils put their activities on hold. Through the COVID Recovery Program, we will re-energize our parishes and restore our councils.

The past 18 months gave us a new appreciation for our bonds of brotherhood. We must resume our work to strengthen families, ensure financial security, and serve the least fortunate among us. This work is inherently tied to council life.

Knights must also assist in the renewal of our parishes. The pandemic made clear how much we need the Mass. As the crisis pressed on, many were cut off from the Eucharist. Now, as we slowly recover, we must invite the faithful back.

Our councils must work hand-in-hand with our pastors. We aren't just the strong right arm of the Church, we are also the strong right arm of our parish priests.

I am grateful for all the councils implementing the COVID Recovery Program. Around the world, brother Knights are knocking on doors, making phone calls, and welcoming parishioners back to Mass.

We are also restoring many of our larger initiatives. The Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C., reopened to the public in June. Pilgrims can once again visit the shrine and experience its spiritual riches.

Grand Knight Armando Mena of Council 3162 in San Diego summed up our duty. He said: "There is something for every man to do," for as "Christ told St. Francis, 'Go, rebuild my Church.'"

I echo these wise words. The Knights of Columbus must be leaders in the recovery, and all of us have a role to play. I'm confident we'll step up, with courage. And we *will* emerge stronger — as an Order, and a Church.

# Charity

As the recovery continues, our charitable work is rising. And it is doing so amid a trying time.

Much of the suffering caused by the pandemic is still with us. Many struggles that existed before have worsened. In this time of great need, we must redouble our commitment to our Faith in Action programs.

Understandably, many of our traditional charitable activities took a backseat to more immediate needs. Some were simply not possible because of shutdowns and restrictions. Despite these headwinds, Knights still set a high standard for charitable service.

Last year, we stepped *up* with more than \$150 million in donations. And we stepped *forward* with more than 47 million hours of hands-on volunteer service.

From Asia to the Americas to Europe, we served countless worthy causes — with innovation and creative courage. It is an achievement we can be proud of — especially during a pandemic.

I was personally inspired by our support for the homeless in Waterbury, Connecticut. Last month, I joined brother Knights as they put together bags of supplies. They're known as "Brian Bags," and they're named after a local homeless man who died in 2017 because he lacked support. Connecticut Knights refuse to let that happen to other homeless, and it is our privilege to serve our neighbors in this special way.

I have also been inspired by the Order's continued commitment to our long-standing initiatives. We donated more than 100,000 coats to kids. From Washington, D.C., to the Constance Lake First Nation in Canada, we gave the gift of warmth in the coldest months. Over the past 12 years, we have now given coats to more than 800,000 children.

Council 10355 Sandwich Ministry, Atlanta, Ga. (Photo by Audra Melton)





Over and above our pandemic response, we provided nearly \$1.5 million in disaster relief. Our response came in the wake of wildfires, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and tornadoes.

We helped the victims and even saved others from becoming victims. When fires ripped through California and Oregon, Knights were on the ground, building shelters and fighting the inferno.

And we continue our support for Special Olympics. While the pandemic prevented many competitions from happening, we still donated more than \$3.5 million and nearly half a million volunteer hours. Our efforts have helped Special Olympics bounce back from the crisis.

Finally, we reached a new milestone in partnership with the Global Wheelchair Mission. We have now donated more than 100,000 wheelchairs around the world. It took us nearly 20 years to reach this point — starting with a gift of 2,000 wheelchairs to landmine victims in Afghanistan in 2003. But we're not done. We've now set our sights on donating 100,000 more wheelchairs. The Knights will continue to give the gift of mobility.

On every front, the end of the pandemic is an invitation to action. Charity is our highest calling, and it demands our renewed focus. Where there's pain, let us heal. Where there's grief, let us comfort. Where there's need, let us meet it, in new and creative ways.

One ongoing need is support of the priesthood. Solidarity with our priests has always been a hallmark of the Knights of Columbus.

Early next year, the Vatican will hold an important symposium on the priesthood, and I'm pleased to announce that the Knights of Columbus will be a major sponsor. We have committed \$200,000 to the event, which will be hosted by our brother Knight from Canada, Cardinal Marc Ouellet, who now serves as the Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops.

At the same time, we will continue to provide scholarships to seminarians. Last year, we provided more than \$1.2 million to this worthy cause. And we will grow that number in the years to come.



Pope Francis prays for victims of war in Mosul on March 7. He stands in front of a cross fashioned from the charred pews of St. Addai Church in Karamles, which was desecrated and burned by Islamic State militants in 2014. (Vatican Media)

As we serve our communities, countries and Church, we cannot forget our fellow Christians in the Middle East who continue to face great hardship.

Their plight is still dire, as Pope Francis recently reminded us during his historic visit to Iraq. The Knights of Columbus was honored to sponsor the papal Mass in Erbil, which was attended by some 10,000 Iraqis.

In that war-torn region, the Holy Father declared that “fraternity is more durable than fratricide” and “hope is more powerful than hatred.”

Our fraternity helps provide that hope. In the past year alone, we devoted \$4.4 million to help the region's persecuted religious minorities. We financially supported a new effort to clear landmines, restore farmland, and allow refugees to return. Our total Middle East relief now stands at more than \$30 million. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus,

our fellow Christians are rebuilding their homes and reclaiming their future. We will continue to aid them, because persecuted Christians can count on the Knights of Columbus.

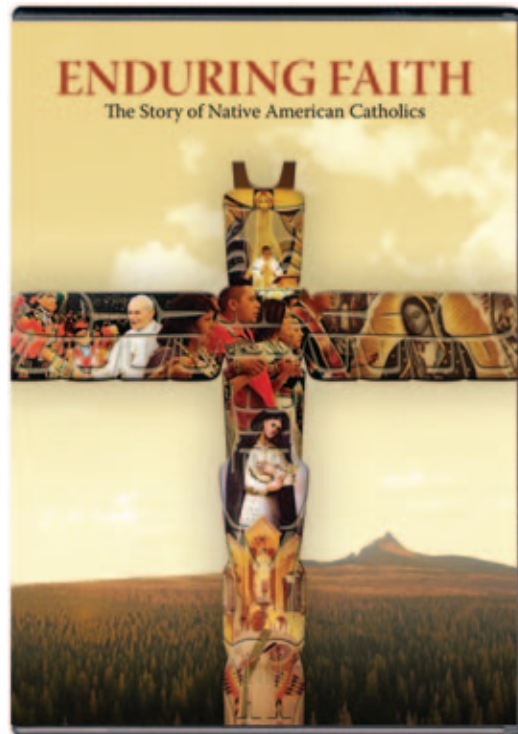
Beyond the Middle East, we are also focused on the plight of Christians in Nigeria, Africa's largest country. Tens of thousands of innocent Nigerians have been killed for their faith in recent decades. Last year, we announced a new initiative to report on this perilous situation.

Our partners have already conducted extensive interviews with Nigerian Christian families. Brother Knights will be on the ground there beginning this month. We're confident their efforts will lead to much greater attention to the crisis faced by Nigeria's Christians.

Closer to home, we continue to support our fellow Catholics in Native American and First Nation communities.

In New Mexico, a shrine in honor of St. Kateri Tekakwitha is being built with our support. And last month, Knights in South Dakota led a pilgrimage to the burial site of Nicholas Black Elk, a revered Lakota man who has been declared a Servant of God.

Also this year, the Supreme Council released a new documentary film about the Catholic faith of Indigenous communities in North America. It is a powerful testament to the contributions they have made to our Church and culture. The film is titled *Enduring Faith*, and it began airing on ABC affiliates in May.



Father Henry Sands, executive director of the Black and Indian Mission Office, celebrates a Mass for Healing Among Native Communities on the feast of St. Juan Diego, Dec. 9, 2020, at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine. (Photo by Sarah Gorham)

# Pro-Life

Our charitable work helps millions of the most vulnerable. We never seek their gratitude, and some cannot give it — because they are not yet born. We are fighting for their right to life. The Knights have a distinguished legacy of defending life.

We've played a leading role in national and state marches for life since they began. While the pandemic disrupted most marches over the past year, Knights found creative ways to continue their witness.

In Canada, Knights led a smaller National March for Life. Virginia Knights served as marshals for a scaled-back March for Life in Washington, D.C. Both marches also featured virtual rallies with hundreds of thousands participating.

These marches for life are a vital witness, and I look forward to the day when together we march to victory!

Last year marked the 60th anniversary of the Silver Rose Program. Beginning in 1960, Knights from Canada, Mexico and the United States have carried silver roses across North America's borders, signifying our unity and shared commitment to building a culture of life.

Sixty years ago, the program began by crossing the International Bridge in Laredo, Texas. For the anniversary celebration, Knights crossed that same bridge. Guided by Our Lady of Guadalupe, we look forward to 60 more years of the Silver Rose Program.



Pro-life leaders march to the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., after the March for Life virtual rally Jan. 29. (Photo by Jeffrey Bruno)





Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles blesses the 100th ultrasound machine donated by California Knights at the Guadalupe Medical Center May 1.  
(Photo by Manuel Carmona)

Certainly, our most notable pro-life program is the Ultrasound Initiative.

It continues to grow and save countless unborn lives. Since 2009, the Order has placed more than 1,400 life-saving machines in pregnancy resource centers.

Two state councils have now donated more than 100 machines each. Florida dedicated its 100th machine last October, and California followed in April. Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles personally blessed California's 100th device.

The Ultrasound Initiative has now reached Asia. Under the leadership of our territorial deputy, Gen. Shin Kyoung-soo, we placed our first machine in South Korea in April, and more are on the way.

The fight for life has many fronts. They all require our creative courage, and the coming year will be pivotal.



Auxiliary Bishop Linus Lee Seong-hyo of Suwon, president of the Committee for Family and Life of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Korea (CBCK), blesses the first ultrasound placed in South Korea, April 23.  
(Photo by Spirit Juice Studios)

# Marist Poll Numbers

**70% of Americans would limit abortion to, at most, the first three months of pregnancy.**



**58% of Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion.**

In the United States, the Hyde Amendment is under attack. This federal policy bans the use of taxpayer funding for abortion and has saved more than 2.4 million lives since it was first enacted in 1976. It's named for its chief sponsor, the late Congressman Henry Hyde — a proud brother Knight. He was a champion for the unborn in his more than three decades in Congress. But now a slim majority wants to repeal his lifesaving work.

The Knights will stand in the gap to defend it. Nearly 60% of Americans want to keep this commonsense policy. For the sake of the unborn, we will fight to preserve the Hyde Amendment.

Also this year, the Supreme Court will hear its most important abortion case in decades.

For the first time, the court could allow states to ban abortion before the age of viability. It would be a major victory for all who cherish life, resulting in a wave of new pro-life laws across America. Our annual Marist polling consistently shows that 3 out of 4 Americans favor substantial restrictions on abortion.

Let us pray that the court will stand for life. And let us hope that when we gather at next year's convention, we will celebrate the most pro-life Supreme Court decision in American history.



K of C leaders from Mexico receive three Knights of Columbus Silver Roses on the Gateway to the Americas International Bridge between Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo.  
(Photo by Spirit Juice Studios)

# Insurance & Investing



Henry Rangel is the Assistant General Agent for Knights of Columbus councils in and around Houston, Texas. In that role he educates, guides and advises Catholics on all matters pertaining to their financial security. *(Photo by Eric Kayne Photography)*

The Knights of Columbus stands for life, from conception to natural death. Just as we protect the unborn, we offer insurance to protect the families of brother Knights when the worst comes to pass.

Insurance has been synonymous with the Order since 1882. It is a cornerstone of our charity, which begins at home. The past year and a half reminded us of the importance of our insurance program. Amid the pandemic, Catholic families looked to us for financial peace of mind.

Sadly, COVID has claimed the lives of many brother Knights and their loved ones. Last year, we paid more than \$524 million in death benefits, of which approximately \$35 million was related to COVID. As always, we were there for families in their hour of grief.

While the pandemic posed many challenges to our field force, it brought out the best of their determination and innovation.

Agents quickly moved to a virtual business model. Instead of meeting across the kitchen table, they met *on* the kitchen table, through laptops and cell phones. New virtual Fraternal Benefits Nights became a popular way for families to discover all that we offer.

Despite a difficult year, insurance sales were strong. All told, our agents sold \$7.4 billion in new insurance. We now have more than \$116 billion of insurance in force protecting Catholic families.

And we continue to earn superior ratings from A.M. Best and Standard & Poor's.



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I commend our field force for their hard work through a tough time. Our agents embodied creative courage. And they made a remarkable difference for Catholic families.

Beyond insurance, we continue to offer a wide variety of financial products. All of them allow Catholics to invest and donate in ways that align with our Catholic faith and advance our core beliefs.

In 2019, we launched a donor-advised fund that can help supercharge your own charity. We call it the Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund. It helps individuals, families and councils set aside money to benefit charities aligned with Catholic teaching.

Through the Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund, you can make contributions that can grow over time and recommend grants to the organizations that matter most to you and your family.

The Charitable Fund is already off to a strong start. After just 18 months, we already have \$14 million in

assets, and we anticipate robust growth in the coming months. Last year, the Charitable Fund enabled donors to grant more than \$1.9 million to charities around the world. And the Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund is poised to make a major impact in the years ahead.

We are also taking new steps to strengthen Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors.

This program allows us to manage faith-driven investments for hundreds of councils, dioceses and religious orders. It offers the broadest Catholic line-up of investment strategies in the world. Now, for the first time, we are making those strategies available to everyone, not just Knights. They're called Knights of Columbus Mutual Funds, and they're a game-changer.

Licensed field agents can now offer our mutual funds to anyone who wants them. You can be sure your investments uphold Catholic teaching without exception. These investment products also complement our insurance products: Catholics can now look to us both for financial protection and financial planning.

With Knights of Columbus Mutual Funds, we are poised to become the go-to financial resource for Catholic families. Father McGivney created the Order to protect those families. And we are advancing that mission into exciting new territory.





New members are invested with the rosary at an Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity in Franklin, Tenn. *(Photo by Spirit Juice Studios)*

# Membership

In all we do, the Knights inspire. When Catholic men see us protecting families and serving the least fortunate, they will want to join us.

Men want to be part of something bigger than themselves. They want a life of meaning, a life of mission. They find it in our brotherhood. We help them grow, and their families thrive. That's why more than 2 million men currently stand among our ranks.

Growth was a challenge during the pandemic, but we still made progress. Online membership was a major on-ramp for new members. It accounted for 40% of our growth last year. We expect that number to continue growing even as COVID fades.

The new Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity has also proved popular. Early in the pandemic, we adapted the exemplification for online use. Nearly 26,000 Knights benefited from this innovation, including new members and existing members who advanced to the Third Degree. They now have a better sense of our purpose and principles.

We will soon launch an initiative to re-engage existing members. The Affiliate Member Program will free up local councils to focus on what matters most: serving the parish and those in need. The program will begin on a pilot basis this fall, and I'm confident it will be a success.

Every Knight has a duty to expand our brotherhood. We are all ambassadors for the Order, and so today, I issue a challenge to every brother Knight. Between now and next year's convention, invite at least two Catholic men to join us.

Just two men — perhaps they're in your parish; perhaps they're longtime friends or neighbors. All they need to do is visit [kofc.org/joinus](https://kofc.org/joinus).

If each one of us does this, we will set the stage for a new era of growth — growth in good men and good works. We all want to make a bigger difference. By accepting this challenge, you will ensure that happens.

One of the most effective ways to grow the Order is to highlight our charitable work.

It is also important to grow the Fourth Degree. In the past year, more than 15,000 Knights pledged themselves to lives of patriotism. Total membership in the Fourth Degree now stands at more than 370,000. I encourage every Knight who is not yet a member of the Fourth Degree to join. What starts with charity, unity and fraternity doesn't stop there. Our principles point to love of country. Patriotism is an essential part of who we are.

A perfect example of our patriotism is on full display in the Philippines. This year marks the 500th anniversary of Catholicism there. The Catholic faith has long been a source of Filipino pride and progress. Our more than 470,000 members in the Philippines are taking a leading role in the celebrations. I thank God for their witness and pray that this anniversary provides not only an opportunity for celebration, but also for renewal.

As patriots, we support the best traditions of our countries. For that reason, we stand opposed to the dangerous rise of so-called “cancel culture.” From North America to Europe and beyond, there is a coordinated campaign to rewrite history and intimidate anyone who stands in the way. Cancel culture focuses *exclusively* on injustice and overlooks the march *toward* justice. Ultimately, this campaign is divisive, and it threatens to tear our societies apart.

The Knights of Columbus believes in a better way. Where “cancel culture” blames, we work for reconciliation and reform. Where it divides, we unite — promoting the equal brotherhood of all.

Knights have always advocated for faithful citizenship, religious liberty and equal justice. We play a vital role in building societies where all can live in peace and harmony. We have done so from our founding to this very day. And we will continue to do so in the future, to an even greater degree.

Archbishop Jose Palma of Cebu participates in a jubilee procession April 4 with the renowned image of the Santo Niño (Holy Child) in Cebu City. The oldest Catholic icon in the Philippines, the image was a gift from Ferdinand Magellan to the local ruler and his wife on the occasion of their baptism on April 14, 1521. (Photo by Sammy Navaja/Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines)





# Faith Formation



Jaime Morales, a member of Bishop Maurice F. Burke Council 4031, leads his wife, Laura, and daughters in praying the rosary at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in Cody, Wyo. (Photo by Spirit Juice Studios)

In all we do, our success depends on our commitment to charity, unity and fraternity.

Our principles are a powerful synthesis of the Gospel. They enable us to lead the extraordinary lives to which Christ has called us. By embracing our principles and doing good works, we will spread the faith. This can be difficult, but our baptism demands no less.

Ultimately, we have the responsibility to evangelize our culture. We have little choice, because if we don't evangelize our culture, our culture will evangelize us.

In many ways, the cultural current is trending against us. It tells us that what we hold to be right is wrong, and what we hold to be true is false. It is no wonder the Catholic family is struggling.

Consider the facts. Nearly a third of Catholic marriages end in divorce. Eight of 10 Catholic children leave the Church by their early 20s. The median age at which they begin to fall away is just 13 years old.

My brother Knights, these challenges are unprecedented. Our commitment to address them must also be unprecedented. It falls to us to strengthen the Catholic family.

The Knights of Columbus is well suited to the task. For generations, we have helped Catholics become better husbands, better fathers, and better men in every respect. That's exactly what the world needs right now.

I have long admired the Order's impact on men. As a Navy JAG officer for many years, I saw young men who had the courage to serve their country, but who nonetheless made poor decisions and got into trouble. My job was to represent them at courts-martial. Many lacked strong families or strong father figures. And too few had a living and real faith. This made a lasting impression on me and I came to appreciate that one of the best things about the Knights is that we can help fill this void.

As supreme knight, I will prioritize new initiatives to strengthen the faith of men, and the faith of our families. I firmly believe that, more and more, our success as an Order will be judged by this standard. Our growth depends on empowering men to be the husbands and fathers that God wants us to be. It is harder than ever, and for that reason, we must push forward as never before. It will require creative courage.

Fortunately, we are building on a strong foundation. Following the success of our Faith in Action program model, last year we launched a new video series called *Into the Breach*. Its 12 episodes focus on the topics that matter most to men — from fatherhood, to masculinity, to spiritual warfare.

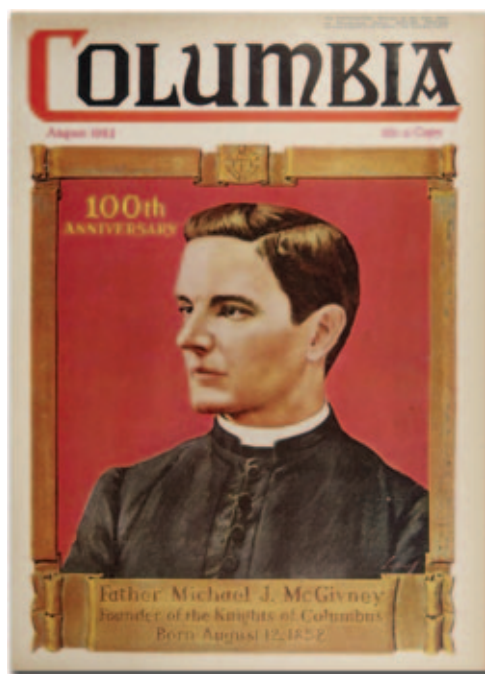
*Into the Breach* has proven immensely popular. To date, it has been viewed more than 750,000 times. Its accessible format and content make *Into the Breach* a template for future projects.

This spring, we launched a new monthly webcast, known as KnightCast. Available on our website, via email, and through social media, KnightCast is designed to strengthen men in our faith. Each episode includes inspiring stories, interviews with Catholic leaders, and the supreme chaplain's monthly challenge. It has been well received and we are taking steps to make it even better. It will re-launch this fall, and I encourage every Knight to subscribe.

New projects are coming soon. One of the most important is a new video series on family and

fatherhood. The Knights must be a beacon of hope on these critical issues. We have an opportunity, and an obligation, to help Catholics fulfill their calling as husbands and fathers and, above all, as men. This new series will do just that.

You can also look forward to the third season of *Everyday Heroes*. The next round of videos will introduce a new group of inspiring Knights. They come from different backgrounds, but they share one key attribute: Their uncommon faith is a common feature. Their example of courage and action deserves our attention.



*Columbia* celebrated the centennial of Father McGivney's birth with an August 1952 cover story titled "With Vision, Zeal and Charity," which chronicled our Founder's life and legacy.

One of the principal tools to reach and form Knights and their families is *Columbia*. This month marks a century of *Columbia* as the Order's flagship publication. The magazine was redesigned this past fall, coinciding with Father McGivney's beatification, and we are currently developing new content and a digital strategy to further the Order's mission and expand its audience.

Finally, this fall, we will debut a new documentary on St. Joseph. It will explore why St. Joseph is the ideal model for Catholic men. It will also examine why devotion to him has been important through the ages — and why it matters now more than ever. This film will air on network television across America.

# Knights of the Eucharist

The Knights of Columbus does many things. But they all come down to one thing. We get the man right. We empower him to embrace his faith and lead a life of charity, unity and fraternity. And by getting the man right, we start a chain reaction. We can get the marriage right, the family right, the parish right. We can even get the culture right.

A Knight makes a difference far beyond himself. We should witness to our faith in all we do. And all who see us should see the light of Christ shining through us. But a Knight of Columbus only sows the seeds that Christ first plants in us. On the day I was installed as supreme knight, I spoke about our calling as “Knights of the Eucharist.” No words better describe our mission.

The Church teaches us that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.” It is just as much the source and summit in the life of a Knight.

**Christ in the Eucharist is the source of true charity.**

**Christ in the Eucharist is the author of true unity.**

**Christ in the Eucharist is the builder of perfect fraternity.**

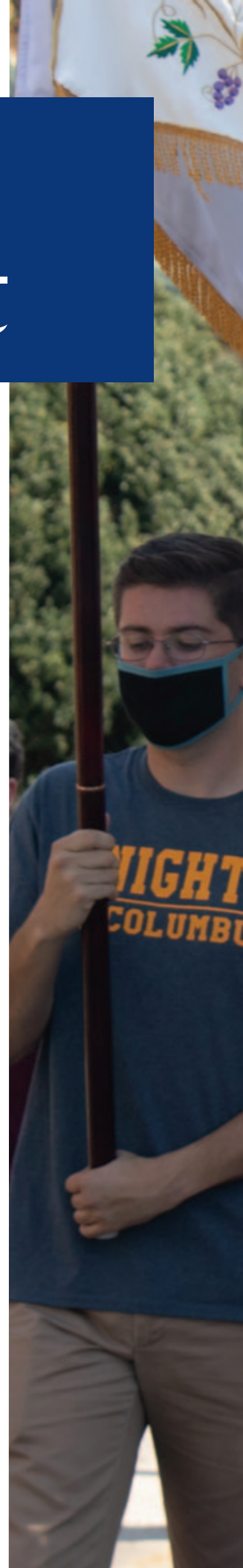
In the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord, we find our strength. The more we devote ourselves to the Eucharist, the more we will understand what it means to be a Knight.

We know what, and Who, the Eucharist is. But many of our fellow Catholics do not. As many as two-thirds of Catholics no longer believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This is deeply troubling. Restoring belief in the Eucharist is essential. The future of our Church depends on it. To that end, I am pleased to announce that the Knights of Columbus will be a major sponsor of the upcoming National Eucharistic Revival in the United States.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is organizing this effort. The bishops will release more details in the months ahead.

But for now, our task is to deepen our own devotion to the Eucharist. We can do this through personal prayer, attendance at Mass, and eucharistic adoration.

The Knights are honored to support the National Eucharistic Revival, even before it begins next year. Working with our bishops and priests, we will strive to renew belief in the Eucharist and build up the Church. We are a force for unity, and we will prove it by pointing to the *source* of unity. As Knights of the Eucharist, we proudly proclaim this truth.





Grand Knight Nicholas Zaso (front right) and other members of St. John Henry Newman Council 11323 at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., lead a eucharistic procession and rosary on campus. Carrying the monstrance is Father David Sherland, council chaplain, who asked the Knights to help organize the event for the intention of national unity. *(Photo by Sarah Przybysz)*



Past Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson confers the medal of office upon his successor, Supreme Knight Patrick E. Kelly, at the conclusion of a June 11 Mass at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn. *(Photo by Tamino Petelinšek)*

# Conclusion

It is truly an honor to lead the Knights of Columbus in this exciting time. And it is a privilege to do so alongside so many dedicated brother Knights.

I was installed as supreme knight just two months ago, together with the new supreme officers and directors, and many of our state deputies. It was a humbling and awesome experience, made all the more so by the sacred setting — St. Mary's Church, where our Blessed Founder established the Order. I cannot think of a more fitting place to have begun our united work.

God is calling us to fulfill a great task. This is a time of challenge, but as every Knight knows, strength rejoices in challenge.

Our Lord has given us a powerful sign of what he wants us to do, and where he wants us to go. In the designs of Providence, it is no coincidence that this Year of St. Joseph comes on the heels of Father McGivney's beatification. These two men are models for every Knight.

In St. Joseph, we see our mission and mandate. Guard the family. Guard the truth. He led through service and creative courage. So must we. It is the only way to overcome the hurdles facing our families, the Church and our culture.

Father McGivney, too, was a man of courage. Like us, he lived in a time of great need. He rose to meet that need, in new and powerful ways. Where he led first, we follow and must lead still. As his heirs, we take his vision to new places and people. There is nowhere else we'd rather be, and nothing else we'd rather do.

As we recall the lives of these two men, we should ask how we can become more like them. So too should we ask how we can meet the moment that we are in. The answer lies before us.

Father McGivney's feast day is only 10 days away, on Aug. 13. It will be his first liturgical memorial since his beatification, and it is a day when every Knight, wherever they are, should deepen their devotion to our Founder. I urge every Knight to pray for his intercession, especially on Aug. 13.

I also urge every Knight to turn to St. Joseph. During my installation, I knelt before a beautiful icon of our Lord's foster father. It is from St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, and that image will be the centerpiece of our next pilgrim icon program. It will travel in every jurisdiction for the next two years. Seek it out. Ask for St. Joseph's inspiration and intercession — for you, for your family, and for the Order.

Finally, let us turn to Our Lady of Guadalupe — the patroness of the Order. We are now just 10 years away from the 500th anniversary of her apparitions to St. Juan Diego. We are already preparing for this great celebration. The following year will mark 150 years since the founding of the Order. As those joyful milestones approach, let us recommit to the highest traditions of our past. And we will advance our timeless mission into the future. That future beckons.

Let us rise to meet it, confident that Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Joseph and Blessed Michael McGivney will guide us.

Let us summon the creative courage to fulfill the calling that our Lord has placed on our hearts.

And let us take comfort in the knowledge that the work of the Order is far from over. The work of the Knights of Columbus is only beginning — and we are the ones who will carry it forward.

*Vivat Jesus!*



Photo by Mike Ross

