

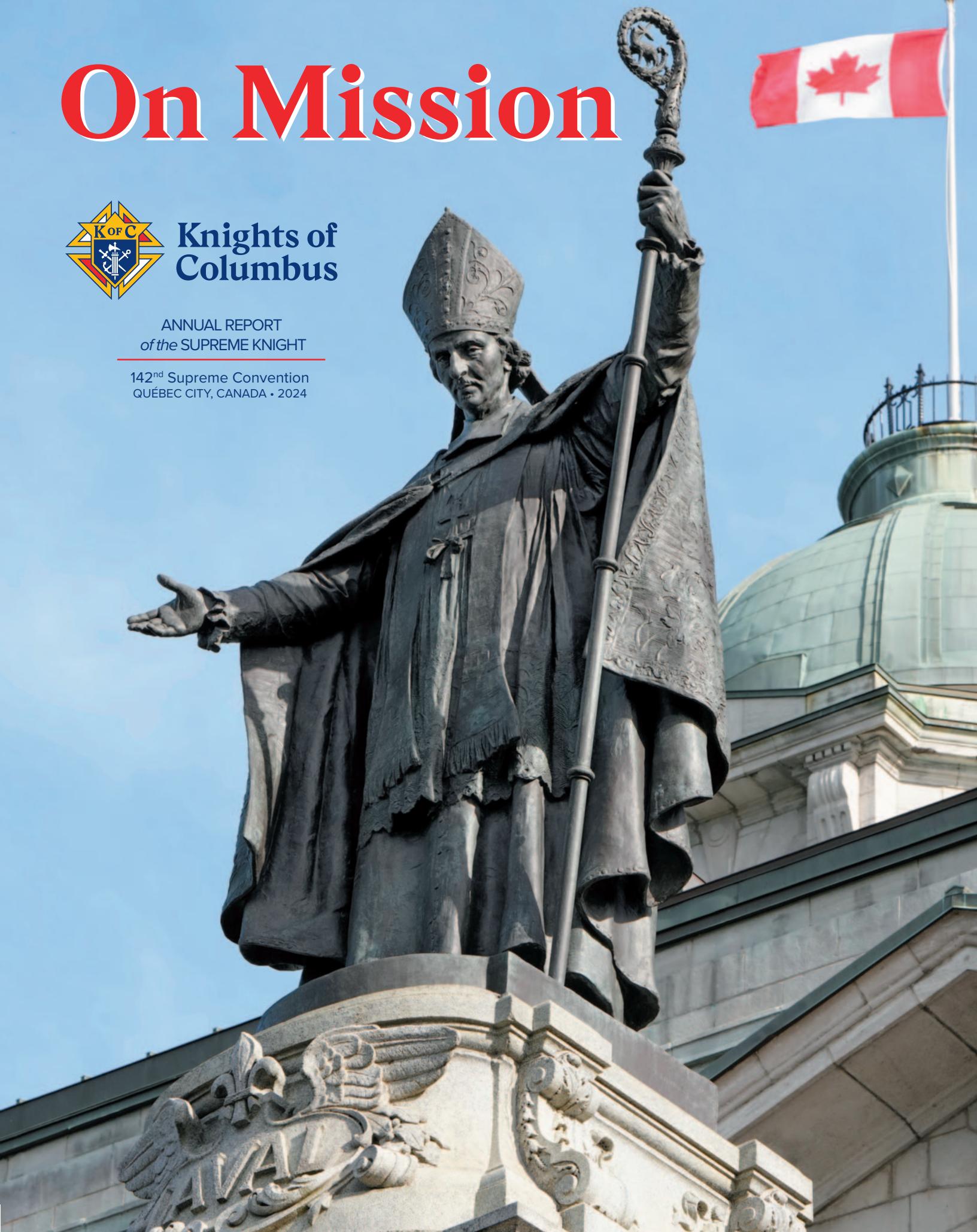
On Mission



**Knights of
Columbus**

ANNUAL REPORT
of the SUPREME KNIGHT

142nd Supreme Convention
QUÉBEC CITY, CANADA • 2024



Front Cover: Statue of St. François de Laval, the first Bishop of Québec (*Photo by Paul Haring*)
Opposite: (*Photo by Michael Collopy*)

2024 Annual Report *of the Supreme Knight*

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, my fellow Knights and friends:
Welcome to our Supreme Convention.

We're here to mark 142 years of being on mission. It's fitting that we're here in Canada, for this is where we first became an international brotherhood, just 15 years after our founding. And since then, we've spread around the world. Everywhere we go, we serve the family and strengthen the faith. And today, I want to express my gratitude. To each and every brother Knight, thank you for making this a banner year in charity, unity and fraternity!

This is a special year for another reason. It has now been 350 years since the Church established the first diocese in Canada. It happened here, in Québec City. At the time, the diocese stretched from the Arctic Circle to the Gulf of Mexico. And ever since, the Catholic faith has shaped this country — and this continent — in profound ways. And we stand with Canada's bishops and priests to continue this witness.

Today, we're especially honored to be with our devoted brother Knight, the Archbishop of Québec and Primate of Canada, Cardinal Gérald Lacroix. Your Eminence, congratulations on this 350th anniversary!



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On Mission

Like the Church in Québec, the Knights of Columbus is on mission — a mission given to us by Christ through the founding vision of Blessed Michael McGivney. From the beginning, Knights have been faithful to this mission. And today, we must summon the courage that these times demand.

St. John Henry Newman once said that “every great change is effected by the few, not the many; by the resolute, undaunted, zealous few” (Sermon 22: Witnesses of the Resurrection).

This is what you and I must choose to be: resolute, undaunted, zealous. It’s the only way to advance our mission in these times. And it’s how the heroes of our faith have built the Church. Consider the very city where we meet. The Québec we know would not exist without the heroic work of Bishop François de Laval and a handful of priests and religious sisters. Each of them could have remained in Europe. But instead, they chose to give up everything, risk their lives, and embrace the difficulties that awaited them in New France. The winters were cold. Food was scarce. And the need for evangelization was immense. But they met hard times with hard work, standing on the rock of faith.

And standing tallest was Bishop François de Laval. Here, in Québec, he built the parish that became home to Canada’s first cathedral. He built the seminary that trained Canada’s first priests. And he built schools and churches and charities, always winning hearts for Christ. It has now been 10 years since his canonization, and St. François de Laval remains an outstanding model of missionary zeal and creative courage.

Laval was a builder — a builder of the faith. And so was another priest we all know well — Father Michael McGivney. In his time, Catholic families were struggling. Fathers were dying in factories, leaving widows and orphans with nothing. And the anti-Catholic culture of the 19th century pressured young men to leave the faith. Father McGivney met those challenges head-on, building up men in faith and strengthening their families.

More than 140 years later, the Knights of Columbus continues to do exactly that. Together, we build up families, parishes and communities that are centered on Christ. There is no greater task. It requires sacrifice, and sometimes even suffering. But that’s what it means to be a disciple. That’s what it means to be on mission.

Father McGivney is our model. Like Bishop de Laval, he spent his life in service to others. And we pray that our Founder, like Laval, will soon be recognized as a saint.

Devotion to Blessed Michael McGivney is growing. Last December, the patronal church of the United States — the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception — unveiled a marble statue of our Founder. It shows Father McGivney holding the Gospels and pointing to the words that define our mission — unity and charity.

This winter, in the heart of New York City, St. Patrick’s Cathedral will unveil its own statue of Father McGivney. Cardinal Dolan, thank you for bringing America’s parish priest to America’s parish church!



Cardinal Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, blesses the new marble statue of Blessed Michael McGivney at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception as Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori, Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly and rector Msgr. Walter Rossi (right) look on. (Photo by Matthew Barrick)

Membership

We share in the mission of Father McGivney and Bishop de Laval — a mission of building up the family and the Church. The days of easy faith are over. That's as true here in Canada as it is in the United States. It's true in Europe and around the world. We all see it. In the U.S. alone, at least 85% of Catholics now leave the Church by the time they're young adults (cf. Dynamic Catholic Institute). In many places around the world, Catholic baptisms are declining and secularism is on the rise. And many of us are worried about the world our children will inherit.

In these challenging times, our mission matters. We must have the zeal of Bishop de Laval and Father McGivney. Like them, we must build. And we must start by building up a new generation of Catholic men — men formed in faith and virtue; men prepared to be missionary disciples.

We're making historic progress. All together, we now have 2.1 million members. Last year alone, more than 92,000 men joined our ranks. And to all my brother Knights, thank you for achieving one of our best years of growth in a century!

Men are joining us around the world. From the United States to Ukraine, from the Philippines to France. This year marks the 10th anniversary of our expansion into the Republic of Korea. We are joined today by our largest-ever Korean delegation of 21 Knights. They are led by Bishop Titus Seo and our territorial deputy, General Shin Kyoung-Soo. To you and all our brother Knights in Korea, thank you for expanding Father McGivney's vision in Asia.

We now have almost 17,000 active councils around the world. But one deserves a special mention. The Knights of Columbus arrived in Cuba 115 years ago. But our first council there — San Agustín Council 1390 — was suppressed in political the turmoil of the 1950s. The same was true for the Order in all of Cuba. But that changed five years ago, when the Archbishop of Havana asked us to revive the council. We did, and



Members of San Agustín Council 1390 in Havana, Cuba, carry a statue of St. John Paul II around Havana Cathedral following a Mass in 2023, marking the 25th anniversary of the pope's apostolic journey to Cuba. (Photo by Adrian Martínez Cádiz)

it's now growing. The Archbishop of Havana is here today. Cardinal Juan García, thank you for bringing the Knights of Columbus back to life in Cuba!

We are growing in Mexico, too, where our Knights have a new tradition. Each year, they reconsecrate themselves to St. Joseph during their annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Christ the King in central Mexico. Throughout the country, Mexican Knights are bearing witness to the faith. That was on full display last October, in Juarez. There, Knights carried a statue of the Virgin Mary around the city's Olympic Stadium, while more than 20,000 people prayed the rosary. To our Mexican Knights, thank you for your powerful witness. *Viva Cristo Rey!*



Korean Knights of Columbus, led by Territorial Deputy Maj. Gen. Shin Kyoung-Soo (far left), celebrate after participating in the March for Life in Gwanghwamun, Seoul. Korean Knights have been instrumental in organizing the annual March for Life, as well as other pro-life initiatives.

We're building in the United States as well — and we're welcoming a record number of Hispanic men. Today, nearly a quarter of Knights who join online are Hispanic — and in the years ahead we will welcome even more. Over half of young American Catholics are now Hispanic. They are more than just the Church's future. They are vital to the Church today.

Ultimately, our duty is to reach every Catholic man. And we have been given a unique opportunity. Recently, we commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate to conduct a national survey in the United States. We asked Catholic men why they join groups like ours. And we asked them why they don't. The study suggests that as many as seven million men are open to joining groups like the Knights. But the vast majority haven't joined for a simple reason: they haven't been invited. Think about that. Seven million potential Knights. And there are millions more here in Canada, in Mexico, and across Europe and Asia. We have a duty to invite these men to build with us.

Today, we have 2.1 million members. But I envision the day when we will have four or five million. Imagine the impact — the communities we could help, the parishes we could serve, and the lives we could change.

Father McGivney created the Knights to make that impact. And by inviting the first Knights to join him in a great work, he created a culture of invitation that we must carry forward. So today, I ask every Knight: Will you extend that invitation, that hand of brotherhood, to the next generation?



French Knights gather after praying the Stations of the Cross at the Shrine of Our Lady of Verdelais during the France territorial convention, June 1. (Photo by François-Regis Salefran)

Charity

We build up men in faith and friendship. And together, we build communities that reflect God's love, especially through our witness to charity.

Last year, Knights spent more than 47 million hours serving and sacrificing for the sake of others. And we set a new record for charitable giving. All told, the Knights of Columbus donated more than \$190 million to those in need!

Our charity is personal, as I saw last November when I visited Annunciation Catholic School in Denver. Most of the students there are underprivileged. Many don't know where their next meal or next set of clothes will come from. So that morning, we gave out more than a thousand winter jackets, through Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids. It was my great joy to personally give a little girl named Lexi our one-millionth coat.

I am grateful to every Knight who has made Coats for Kids such a huge success. We reached the million-coat milestone after 14 years, thanks to your hard work. But we are not done — today, I have a challenge. I'm calling on all of us to double that number in half the time. The Knights of Columbus will give 2 million coats to children in need by the year 2030!

Our charity takes many forms. And we follow the call of Pope Francis to go "to the peripheries." That's where you'll find the Knights — serving those who are overlooked.

In partnership with the Global Wheelchair Mission, we continue to help those who have lost limbs or cannot walk. Last year, we gave the gift of mobility to more than 11,000 people.

And we continue to serve persons with physical and intellectual disabilities through our partnership with Special Olympics. We helped organize nearly 4,000 competitions last year, and we donated more than \$4 million to make Special Olympics a success.



Supreme Director Rene Trevino, past state deputy of California, greets a girl after she receives a new wheelchair at CRIT Baja California, a children's rehabilitation center in Tijuana, Mexico. (Photo by Randy Hale)



First-grader Lexi Cordova wears a golden coat she received in Denver to mark the one million coats given away since Coats for Kids began in 2009. (Photo by Paul Haring)



Deputy Grand Knight Rodney Profit (left) and Past Grand Knight Denny Nacco (center, green visor) of Msgr. Richard C. Madden Council 6629 in Summerville, S.C., celebrate with participants of a free throw-contest for people with disabilities that the council co-sponsored with the Special Olympics South Carolina Area 6 Dorchester Dragons. (Photo by Mystic Productions)



Sister Isabel Blasco holds a baby girl who is cared for by the Sisters of the Company of the Savior in Kalalè, Benin, while Sister Laura Álvarez de Toledo speaks with her mother. The Knights of Columbus is supporting the construction of a new vocational training center at Mater Salvatoris in Kalalè, where the sisters will help young girls develop spiritually, socially and economically. (Photo courtesy of Mater Salvatoris)

Aiding the Persecuted & the Vulnerable

We continue to serve those who are persecuted for our faith. Ten years ago, we promised to help the Christians of the Middle East. Since then, we've rebuilt churches and restored whole communities in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

And today, we're standing with the persecuted Christians of Nigeria. There are more than 20 million Catholics in Nigeria. Many live in fear of kidnapping, violence, forced conversion and even death. Last year, Nigerians accounted for 82% of Christians killed for their faith.

This crisis is a call to action. So we asked Nigeria's bishops how we can help. Their answer was unequivocal. They need us to help their people stand strong in the face of persecution by spreading the hope that comes from faith.

Today, I'm announcing that the Order will sponsor a collaboration between the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria and Franciscan University of Steubenville. We'll fund the ongoing formation of priests and lay leaders — and support the creation of a national catechetical institute in Nigeria. Our efforts will reach thousands of parishes and strengthen the faith of millions of Catholics in the heart of Africa.

We're joined today by two courageous leaders of the Church in Nigeria, Bishop Stephen Mamza and Bishop Matthew Kukah. Your Excellencies, we stand with you to end persecution in Nigeria!

We're mindful of Nigeria's children — especially girls who are often targeted by terrorists for kidnapping. And we're also assisting young girls in the neighboring country of Benin. It's one of the most difficult places on the planet to be a girl. So, we're helping the Sisters of the Company of the Savior build an a vocational training center. With our support, the sisters will teach

young girls in Benin to discover their God-given talents and develop, socially and economically. We're honored to welcome the Superior General of the Company of the Savior. Mother Mercedes Díez de Angulo, thank you for what your congregation is doing to help women and girls in Africa!

Across the world, we're defending women and girls by fighting the evil of human trafficking. In partnership with the Arise Foundation, we've launched a program in the Philippines called "Guardians of Dignity." It's training Filipino Knights and others to sound the alarm when they spot the signs of human trafficking.

Ultimately, we're helping to mobilize a broader movement in the Philippines, and so fulfill Father McGivney's founding mission of protecting the vulnerable, especially women and children.



Father Emmanuel Dan, the chaplain of St. Benedict's Tuberculosis and Leprosy Rehabilitation Hospital in Ogoja, Nigeria, visits with Catholics who were initially displaced from their homes due to violence and persecution, and who were further marginalized when they contracted Hansen's disease. As part of its outreach to persecuted Christians in Africa, the Knights of Columbus will supply new wheelchairs and hospital beds at St. Benedict's. (Photo by Stephen M. Rasche)

Indigenous Outreach

At last year's Supreme Convention, we adopted a historic resolution condemning the scourge of human trafficking. And we also resolved to stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. We're fulfilling this promise in many ways.

In the United States, South Dakota Knights recently made a pilgrimage to the gravesite of Nicholas Black Elk. He was a man of great holiness, who devoted his life to strengthening the faith of the Lakota people. The Church has recognized him as a Servant of God, and we pray for his beatification.

South Dakota Knights also provided wheelchairs on the Pine Ridge Reservation. And when they learned that many of the reservation's children had no beds to sleep on, they built and delivered 100 new beds.

And at this convention, we'll do the same for children of the First Nations. Before the week is out, we'll help build more than 100 beds, and the first ones will go to the Huron-Wendat First Nation, just 15 kilometers from here.

In June, Knights organized a pilgrimage to Canada's National Shrine of St. Kateri Tekakwitha. Pope Francis praised Kateri, the Lily of the Mohawks, during his visit to Canada two years ago, hailing her "exemplary devotion to prayer and work" (Meeting with a Delegation of Indigenous Peoples in Québec, July 29, 2022).

Inspired by her example, on a single day, Knights distributed 600 winter coats to children in the Tobique and Dene First Nations.

Many of those children received their coats from Graydon Nicholas, the former lieutenant governor of New Brunswick who served on our Board of Directors and is a member of the Maliseet First Nation. Graydon, you have been a powerful voice for Indigenous communities and we thank you for your leadership!



Graydon Nicholas, former supreme warden and a member of the Maliseet First Nation, helps a child in the Tobique First Nation try on a new winter coat during a Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids event in December 2023. Knights in New Brunswick distributed more than 100 coats at Mah-Sos School on the First Nation reserve. (Photo by Jamie Bard)



A statue of St. Kateri Tekakwitha is seen outside the Kateri Shrine in Fonda, N.Y. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)



Ontario Knights partnered with Sleep in Heavenly Peace to prepare wood for 100 high-quality beds for children in need throughout Canada, during an event in Windsor, Ontario, July 14.
(Photos by Jonathan Francis)

Disaster Relief

We build up Indigenous communities in faith and charity. And worldwide, we continue to rebuild communities hit by natural disaster. We devoted more than \$1 million to disaster relief last year. And we responded to each crisis with immediate action.

Just days after our convention in Orlando last year, wildfires devastated the Hawaiian island of Maui. They almost completely destroyed the town of Lahaina.

Even before the smoke had cleared, more than 200 Knights swung into action. They delivered supplies by sea, land and air. And they quickly began the work of rebuilding, starting with the local Catholic school, Sacred Hearts. It had burned to the ground, leaving 120 families with nowhere to turn.

With support from around the world, our Hawaiian Knights built a temporary school. And they did it in less than three weeks. Thanks to them, Sacred Hearts reopened in time for the school year. And on the first day of class, 11 teachers showed up to work, despite having lost their own homes in the fire. Their dedication touched our hearts. So we stepped in with immediate financial support to help those courageous teachers rebuild their lives.

One of them wrote to me. She said that she's "more grateful ... than [we] will ever know." And reflecting on our efforts, Bishop Larry Silva of Honolulu called the Knights the "face of the Church."

The town of Lahaina after the wildfires struck the Hawaiian island of Maui in August 2023. (Photo by Marco Garcia)





Knights unload supplies for victims of the wildfires at Sacred Hearts Mission Church in Kapalua, Aug. 24, 2023. (Photo by Marco Garcia)



Students at Sacred Hearts receive instruction in a temporary classroom constructed by Hawaiian Knights. (Photo by Castletown Media)



Military Support & Religious Liberty

Hawaiian Knights were truly heroic. And there's another kind of service that's heroic too.

At this very moment, thousands of Knights are serving their countries in uniform. We're proud of them, and we support them through our 72 military councils and special initiatives for those who serve.

Twenty years ago, we published *Armed with the Faith*. It's a simple, accessible Catholic handbook for military personnel. And we've now distributed more than 600,000 copies.

As someone who served in uniform, I've experienced the pressures of military life, and I know the support and consolation that comes from our faith. *Armed with the Faith* didn't exist when I was deployed, but since then I have often heard about its impact.

I recently received a letter from a Knight named Logan Erickson, a private in the U.S. Army. One day after Mass, Logan picked up a copy of *Armed with the Faith*. He told me it helped him get through basic training. It deepened his faith and his commitment to the Order, and he resolved to become a Fourth Degree Knight. He ended the letter by thanking the Knights for all we do to support those who serve. But Private Erickson, if you're listening, we are the ones who should be thanking you!

Those who serve defend our freedom. And as Knights, we defend our rights in other ways.

In partnership with the Religious Freedom Institute, we'll soon launch a First Amendment training program for military and college councils.

The threats to religious liberty are real — and rising. But the Knights are ready to meet them. We stood against the hatred of the Ku Klux Klan in the early 20th century. We confronted the nativist legacy of the Know-Nothings, who said Catholics couldn't be loyal citizens.

And today, we're fighting the new bigotry that aims to silence people of faith — in Canada, the United States and around the world.

One council deserves special mention. For more than 60 years, Petersburg Council 694 in Virginia has held a Memorial Day Mass at Poplar Grove National Cemetery. But this year, the federal government tried to block it. Virginia Knights refused to let this injustice stand. They sued to protect their First Amendment rights. The federal government backed down — because the Knights of Columbus stood strong!

On the global stage, anti-Christian bigotry has become more aggressive and blatant. That was on full display at the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, where Our Lord and the Last Supper were outrageously mocked. The Olympics should be a celebration of God's gifts and the triumph of human achievement. But in Paris we saw blasphemy — a vile and intentional denigration of our faith.

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



Father Gino Rossi celebrates a Mass attended by Knights of Columbus at Poplar Grove National Cemetery in Petersburg, Va., May 27. Petersburg (Va.) Council 694 has held an annual Memorial Day Mass at the cemetery for more than 60 years. In 2024, a permit for the Mass was initially denied but later granted after the Knights brought a lawsuit against the National Park Service. (Photo by Steve Eilert)

Ukraine

We will always stand for human rights and human dignity. The challenges we face vary by country. But they're especially dire for our brother Knights in Ukraine. They are fighting for their lives — and their country's survival.

It's been two and a half years since Russia launched its unjust war. Since day one, the Order has rallied to support the people of Ukraine and we're continuing to expand our partnerships. With Protez, we are providing prosthetics for the victims of war, and with the Knights of Malta, we're training civilians in life-saving first aid. I want to recognize and thank Fra' John Dunlap, the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, who truly honors us with his presence today.

Our K of C Charity Convoys have now delivered more than 8.5 million pounds of relief supplies to shattered communities. K of C Mercy Centers and programs have given material and spiritual aid to more than 1.6 million refugees — mostly women and children. And through the Ukraine Solidarity Fund, we've already provided more than \$17 million for humanitarian relief.

The Russian authorities have taken notice. In fact, they've officially banned the Knights of Columbus from the territory they occupy. Let me be clear: Their ban is our badge of honor!

In fact, the entire Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church has been banned. Russian authorities are using faith as a weapon of war. And what they fear most is the Church's message of human freedom.

But Ukraine's bishops and priests will not be silenced. And that includes two great witnesses who have traveled from Ukraine to be with us today: Archbishop Mieczysław Mokrzycki of Lviv and Bishop Mykhaylo Bubniy of Odesa. Your Excellencies, we are grateful that you are here.

A Knights of Malta staff member demonstrates life-saving first aid techniques in Lviv on July 20, at the first in a series of training sessions organized by Ukrainian Knights. (Photo by Igor Ivanovych)

One story shows the courage of Catholics in Ukraine in an especially powerful way. In the early days of the war, Russian forces captured the city of Melitopol. It's the home of St. Peter Council 16252. Its chaplain, Father Oleksandr Bohomaz, refused to abandon his parishioners. The occupation left Melitopol with little food, little fuel, and urgent medical needs. From the very start, Father Oleksandr fed the hungry and cared for the sick. And he brought the sacraments to parishioners who were trapped in their homes.

It didn't take long for Russian intelligence to learn his name. They put him under surveillance, came to his parish, and then to his rectory. They interrogated him multiple times — and even threatened to execute him. And they repeatedly asked Father Oleksandr about his participation in the Knights of Columbus. He said, "They accused me of being the one who recruits men" to the Knights. "And it's true, I did encourage our men to become Knights."

Father Oleksandr was eventually arrested and deported — and he's here today. Father, your courage is an inspiration to all of us!

In February, Ukraine State Deputy Youriy Maletskiy sent me a letter about the Order's humanitarian relief efforts. He wrote: "We can calculate the number of





Father Oleksandr Bohomaz is pictured during the Ukraine State Convention in Bryukhovychi, Ukraine, in May 2023. (Photo by Andrey Gorb)

food boxes, packages ... the amount of clothes, the weight of medicines and medical equipment ... but we will never be able to put a number on the value of this help, because human life has no price." He ended with a request to all of us: "I appeal to you to continue to remember us in your prayers, and not to leave us alone."

Youriy Maletskiy, we hear you — and I promise all our Ukrainian Knights: We will never abandon you!

Our Polish Knights are keeping this promise in a unique way. They've welcomed refugees with open arms. And they keep our Mercy Centers and Charity Convoys running. These Knights are continuing the legacy of their countrymen.

That includes the family of Józef and Wiktoria Ulma, who gave their lives rescuing Jews in World War II.

Pope Francis approved the Ulma family's beatification last year. They became the first family beatified together, including the unborn child in Wiktoria's womb.

We've created a special exhibit featuring relics of the entire family at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C.

We are honored to tell the story of the Ulma family, and we will strive to follow their heroic example of defending the most vulnerable.



Beatification portrait of the Ulma family by Oleg Czyżowski



Field Agent Mark Pan (center) of Lee Wah Agency in British Columbia greets his insurance field force colleagues. More than 600 Knights of Columbus insurance professionals gathered in Dallas for a sales conference featuring industry speakers, peer panels and events in July 2023. (Photo by Paul Haring)

Insurance & Investments

We have a solemn duty to protect families — a duty rooted in our founding.

Since the days of Father McGivney, we have pooled our money to help widows and orphans. And we've built our life insurance program around the same principle of mutual aid. When families lose a loved one, we are there for them — just as we have always been. We now protect Catholic families with more than \$123 billion of life insurance.

We value the trust our families place in us, and we're widely recognized for our stewardship of their financial well-being. *Forbes* has named us one of America's best life insurance companies for three years running. Standard & Poor's awarded us a superior rating again last year. And we've now had top marks from AM Best for 40 years in a row.

Life insurance is only one part of how we serve families. We also help them plan for their future, through Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors. Knights of Columbus Mutual Funds are available to anyone who wants to invest in line with the Catholic faith. And we help Catholic institutions steward their resources.

We now manage more than \$2.2 billion for dioceses, religious communities and families. And every dollar we invest respects the Church's moral teaching.



**STANDARD
& POOR'S**
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This is also true of the Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund (KCCF). We launched it five years ago. And this year, we passed a major milestone. Through KCCF, a wide variety of generous donors have now given more than \$100 million to over 2,000 worthy charities.

Our continued growth proves the timeless value of Father McGivney's vision. But it's also a testament to the tireless work of our fellow Knights. One thousand K of C insurance agents advance our mission every day. They do outstanding work. And I couldn't be more grateful for their commitment and professionalism.

When I became Supreme Knight, I asked Bob Marlowe and Joe DiCalogero to be my senior insurance advisors. Both of these men have been top-performing general agents for decades. And they know what it takes to keep us strong and growing. After a combined 85 years of building up the Knights, they're both retiring this year. Bob Marlowe and Joe DiCalogero, thank you for serving the Order so well for so long!



Photo by Bryce Vickmark



Photo by John J. Coyle Jr.

General Agents Joe DiCalogero (left) and Bob Marlowe (right) are retiring after a combined 85 years of service.

Pro-Life

We protect families because they are a gift from God. And the same sense of mission compels us to defend all human life.

In Canada and the United States, we're fighting the evil of assisted suicide. In May, we were a leading sponsor of a joint conference on end-of-life care organized by the Canadian and U.S. bishops' conferences.

With them, we reject the lie that some lives are not worth living; that suffering is meaningless; and that we can be the masters of our final destiny. We know that God is the author of life. And our responsibility — our duty — is to cherish and protect life, not end it!

The same goes for children and their mothers. We steadfastly defend their dignity and right to life. Again last year, we participated in national pro-life marches around the world. And in the U.S., Knights organized and joined state marches from coast to coast.

Before the March for Life in Washington, D.C., we held the second annual Life Fest. We co-hosted it with the Sisters of Life, and all told, more than 6,000 young people joined us. They came to celebrate the gift of human life. And while we aimed to inspire them, it was their joy that inspired us. The pro-life movement is young and vibrant, and it fills us with hope.

With *Roe v. Wade* gone, laws now protect unborn life in nearly half of the United States. And the best estimates say that pro-life laws have prevented one out of every four abortions (cf. Institute of Labor Economics).

Our annual Marist polling continues to show that two-thirds of Americans want real legal limits on abortion. But in many places, we've faced a tough slog at the ballot box. This November alone, as many as 11 states may put abortion before voters. Life may prevail in some of them. But the abortion industry is fighting hard, with fear and lies.

Knights and family members participate in the National March for Life in Ottawa on May 9. (Photo by Patrick Doyle)



The United States is not the only country where life is at risk. France put the so-called right to abortion in its constitution this year. And recently in Mexico, the Supreme Court ruled that pro-life state laws were unconstitutional. The reality is, we are not just fighting legal and policy battles. We are fighting what John Paul II described as a culture of death and what Pope Francis has called a throwaway culture.

Ultimately, this battle is spiritual. As St. Paul told the Ephesians: “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood.” But “with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness” (Eph 6:12). We must remember this, especially when the road is steep. No matter what happens, our faith demands that we continue to pray and push forward, in hope. And I know that when it comes to supporting vulnerable mothers and their unborn children, the Knights of Columbus will never waver!

Our witness to charity can build a culture of life. Last year, we placed 135 ultrasound machines in pregnancy resource centers throughout the United States. That brings our total to more than 1,800 ultrasounds, with many more on the way. Our Ultrasound Initiative is saving thousands of lives every year.

We've taken our newest pro-life initiative to new heights. Through our ASAP program — Aid and Support After Pregnancy — in just two years, we have donated more than \$11 million dollars to pregnancy centers and maternity homes. That's more than double our initial goal. ASAP has been so successful because our pro-life witness is rooted in love. And while some may be tempted to discouragement, we must give hope to those around us, reminding them that the greatest victories often spring from adversity.

The pro-life movement is proof. When *Roe v. Wade* made abortion-on-demand the law of the land, we did not give up. We rallied to the cause, with courage and perseverance. And after five decades of hard work, we prevailed.

Today, the work is even harder. But it doesn't matter how hard it is or how long it takes — we will never stop building a culture of life!



Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William Lori celebrates Mass at Life Fest. Cardinal Seán O’Malley, to his right, served as the homilist and concelebrated with several other bishops and dozens of priests.
(Photo by Jeffrey Bruno)



Sister Charity (left) and Sister Cora Caeli of the Sisters of Life welcome pro-life young people to Life Fest. (Photo by Jeffrey Bruno)

Church Support & Faith Formation



Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly joins Jesuit Father James Conn, Superior of the Casa Santa Maria and its resident priests who are pursuing advanced studies at universities in Rome, on Jan. 14. (Photo by Tamino Petelinšek)

The pro-life movement is a powerful witness to the love of Christ. And as Knights, we also witness to that love in many other ways. That includes our unfailing support for the Church.

Through our vocations support program (RSVP) we gave more than \$4.1 million last year to the formation of seminarians and women religious in Canada, the United States and around the world. And we supported dioceses and religious communities in the ongoing education of priests and women religious. In Rome, we helped American, Canadian and Filipino priests prepare to become the Church's future teachers and leaders.

And working closely with Cardinal Marc Ouellet, we once again sponsored a major theological conference on vocations at the Vatican.

We're also proud to help the Holy See Mission to the United Nations. This year marks its 60th anniversary. To celebrate this milestone, we're strengthening our long history of support for the Mission, as it brings the Church's prophetic voice to the world stage.

One Knight here can personally attest to the importance of Vatican diplomacy. We're honored to be joined today by our Former Deputy Supreme Knight, who served with distinction as Canada's Ambassador to the Holy See. Ambassador Dennis Savoie, thank you for your service to God, to Canada and to the Knights of Columbus!



Pope Francis addresses world leaders gathered at the United Nations General Assembly, Sept. 25, 2015. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

We are also helping the Vatican's Historical Archives restore precious documents from the missionaries who brought the Gospel to North America. Catholics on this continent can trace our heritage to these letters from giants of our faith like John Carroll, Jean de Brébeuf and Junípero Serra.

The Church's work of evangelization continues in all our countries. But we know that to change the world, we must first be changed ourselves. A man cannot give what he does not have. And as Catholic men, we need to have a living faith.

That is why we started *Cor* — to gather and build up men through prayer, faith formation and fraternity. *Cor* is meant to transform us, by drawing us closer to Christ, and to each other. And as men grow together in faith and fraternity, they grow as husbands, fathers and citizens. In less than two years, more than 650 councils have started *Cor*. And nearly 4,000 more have plans to start this transformational initiative in the coming year.

Cor is answering an urgent need for a deepened faith and an authentic Catholic brotherhood. We live in a time of unprecedented isolation. In the United States, more than a quarter of Millennials say they have no close friends. And nearly the same number say they have no friends at all (YouGov, 2019).

Men, in particular, are suffering from loneliness. But *Cor* gives them a place to connect — to open up their lives to one another about the hopes they have and the challenges they face, at work and more importantly in their families. *Cor* helps men find and form authentic Christian friendships.

I believe this is the reason *Cor* has been adopted with such enthusiasm. And as Catholic men grow closer to one another, they grow closer to Christ. As one deputy grand knight put it, *Cor* is "the answer to what the Church needs today."

Every *Cor* group is different. Many are using our *Men of the Word* Bible Study. And many are watching our newest video series, *Into the Breach: The Mission of the Family*. It gives actionable insights for husbands and fathers, and in less than a year, it has been viewed over 1.5 million times.

We have a wealth of content to use in *Cor*, and there's even more on the way. Earlier this summer, I announced a new partnership with the Augustine Institute. It's one of the best producers of Catholic content in the world. And we're making its resources available to Knights. We now have a dedicated section on FORMED, their popular streaming service. Knights can access award-winning videos featuring some of the Church's best teachers and speakers. And through this collaboration, we're already developing new, tailor-made resources specifically for *Cor*.

We're doing this work to deepen our faith and strengthen our families. And as always, we're blessed to have the support of our wives. Our wives are essential partners in everything we do.

I was reminded of this truth in a powerful way last fall, when I had the honor to give the eulogy at Ann Dechant's funeral. Ann was the devoted wife of Supreme Knight Virgil C. Dechant. He led the Order with distinction for 23 years, and she served the Knights no less than him. Through it all, she sacrificed for her family and the Order with heroic generosity. Ann cared for her young children and raised them to know and love Christ, all while assisting her husband as he led a growing, global organization. In her final moments on earth, she prayed with a relic of Blessed Michael McGivney.

We are joined today by Ann and Virgil's daughter, Karen Thompson. Karen, we are forever grateful for the work and witness of your mother and father!



Pope John Paul II greets Virgil and Ann Dechant on Feb. 22, 1987, following the completion of restoration work on the façade of St. Peter's Basilica. (L'Osservatore Romano Photo)

Knights of the Eucharist

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

For the last two years, U.S. Catholics have looked to the Blessed Sacrament in a profound way through the National Eucharistic Revival.

It included four pilgrimages this summer, each starting on opposite ends of the country. Thousands of Knights and their families joined these processions, for 60 days and over 6,500 miles, tracing a living Sign of the Cross over the nation.

The Seton Route began on the East Coast, in the parish where Father McGivney founded the Knights. From St. Mary's Church in New Haven, pilgrims followed our Eucharistic Lord through New York, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. They crossed the Appalachians, into Pennsylvania and then Ohio, before reaching Indianapolis.

I had the privilege of joining that same procession on Memorial Day weekend. I travelled into New York City with my wife and our youngest daughter. We walked with the pilgrims as they made their way from St. Patrick's Cathedral through Manhattan.



As we processed down Lexington Avenue, one of the organizers noticed the K of C logo on my shirt. He asked, "Are you a Knight?" I said, "Yes ... yes, I am." Then he asked if I'd help carry the canopy. I said I'd be honored.

It was a truly amazing experience. Tourists knelt on the sidewalk and took videos. Waiters came outside and crossed themselves. Onlookers broke into spontaneous applause. And all the while, hundreds of pilgrims sang songs and bore witness to Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. Even on the streets of New York City, it was clear — Jesus is alive, he's real, and he's changing hearts!

All four pilgrimages converged in Indianapolis, at the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. There, I joined more than 54,000 fellow pilgrims including thousands of my brother Knights and their families. The stadium was electric, overflowing with excitement and joy — not for a sports team or a musician, but for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But the moment I remember best was when the stadium went utterly dark, except for our Eucharistic Lord illuminated on the altar. A deep silence came over everyone. And there was a profound sense that we were all having a personal encounter with Jesus — heart speaking to heart. In that moment, we all realized: God is actively renewing his Church.

When I was installed as Supreme Knight, I called on all Knights to be, first and foremost, Knights of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic Congress showed us what that means in our time. And so did an extraordinary brother Knight, so many years ago.

The year was 1966. The place was this very city. And the man was the Lieutenant Governor of Québec, Paul Comtois. He was a devout Catholic and devoted Knight, who as a younger man had served as Grand Knight of Council 1889. He had long petitioned the Archbishop of Québec for permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the Lieutenant Governor's

Opposite page: While on a personal pilgrimage, Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly was asked to carry the canopy for a portion of the Seton Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Carrying the Blessed Sacrament is Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations. (Photo by Jeffrey Bruno)

Inset: Bishop William Byrne of Springfield, Mass., (right) leads Benediction during the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, July 18. (Photo by Zach Dobson)

residence. After repeated requests, the Archbishop finally relented. But he had one condition — that Paul Comtois would personally safeguard the Eucharist.

One night, the Comtois family awoke to a raging fire. The Lieutenant Governor carried his wife outside to safety and helped his daughter escape through a chapel window. But he remained in the burning house — he still had a solemn duty.

When the blaze died down, rescuers went in. They found Paul's lifeless body beneath a collapsed stairway. But they didn't just find his charred remains — they found something else, something sacred. He was still clutching the pyx which contained the Blessed Sacrament.

My fellow Knights: Lieutenant Governor Paul Comtois sacrificed his life for the Eucharist.



From top: Lt. Gov. Paul Comtois and his wife, Irène-Anne-Rachel, welcome Queen Elizabeth II to their residence during the Queen's 1964 visit to Canada. (Montreal Gazette Photo)

Just after midnight on Feb. 22, 1966, a raging fire engulfed Bois-de-Coulonge in Québec City, the residence of Lt. Gov. Paul Comtois. A past grand knight of Council 1889, Comtois moved his family to safety but perished in the fire. Along with his charred body, rescuers discovered the pyx containing the Eucharist which had been reserved in the residence's chapel by special permission of the Archbishop of Québec. Comtois had sacrificed his life protecting the Eucharist.

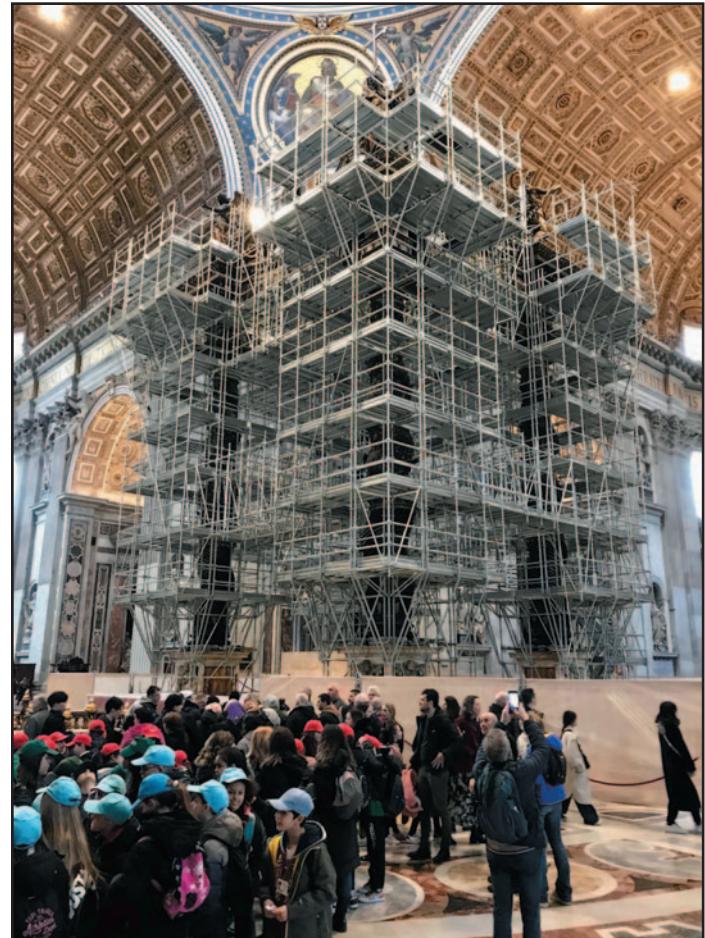


Conclusion

This is our call — to be Knights of the Eucharist — to serve Our Lord in all we do. We answered this call in new and renewed ways over the last year. And as we look to the year ahead, we do so with great confidence and joy.

In 2025, the Church will celebrate a jubilee year. And the Knights of Columbus is preparing the way.

For the last jubilee, in the year 2000, we restored the Maderno Atrium and Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica. And for this jubilee, we're helping restore the baldacchino — the massive bronze canopy, crafted by Bernini, that rises 10 stories above the papal altar and St. Peter's tomb.



Above: Workers restore Bernini's baldacchino over the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica.

Opposite page: Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly inspects the restoration work with Alberto Capitanucci (left) and Dr. Pietro Zander, executives of the Fabbrica di San Pietro on June 26. (Photos by Tamina Petelinsek)

Scaffolding surrounds the baldacchino in February 2024, for the first major restoration of the masterpiece since 1758. The Knights of Columbus is underwriting the project, undertaken by the Fabbrica di San Pietro in preparation for the Jubilee 2025. (Photo by Enrico Demajo)

And today, I'm pleased to announce that we will assist with another landmark restoration — Bernini's bronze masterpiece at the altar of the Chair of St. Peter. It contains the relics of the very chair used by our first pope and honors the authority of all his successors. There are few more important places in all of Christendom.

These renewed works of sacred art will deepen the faith of all who see them — especially in the coming jubilee year. Pope Francis has made hope the jubilee's central message. And our duty, as Catholics and as Knights, is to witness to the hope that comes from Jesus Christ.

Hope is at the heart of who we are. It led Father McGivney and the first Knights to band together, trusting that through them, Our Lord would do great things. Hope led them to provide for widows and orphans. Hope led them to strengthen the family and defend the Church. The work they began was uncertain; the future unknown. But God has blessed the Knights of Columbus beyond what those men could have ever imagined.

And we trust that God will bless our work too. Like the men who gathered in the basement of St. Mary's, we have the hope that comes from faith. It compels us to continue building up our parishes and our families. And like those first Knights, we trust in the Living God who holds the future in his hands. He will guide us, as he did our forefathers. And like them, he calls us to go on mission.

We gladly answer this call. And we promise to be like Blessed Michael McGivney and St. François de Laval, as together, we build a future of hope and faith in Jesus Christ.

Vivat Jesus!



Bernini's massive bronze sculpture at the altar of the Chair of St. Peter is pictured in the Vatican basilica. Following the restoration of the baldacchino, the Knights of Columbus will sponsor the restoration of this masterpiece of sacred art.
(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

N. 643.929

From the Vatican, 24 July 2024

Dear Mr. Kelly,

His Holiness Pope Francis has asked me to convey to you his warm greetings and the assurance of his closeness in prayer to all who will take part in the 142nd Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus, to be held in Québec City from 6 to 8 August next.

The theme chosen for this year's meeting – *On Mission* – centers on the missionary dimension of Christian discipleship that the Holy Father has stressed from the earliest days of his pontificate. In his first Apostolic Exhortation, he reminded us that “every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120). The foundation of the Knights of Columbus, guided by the prophetic vision of Blessed Michael McGivney, was inspired by the urgent need to bear witness to that love, above all in service to the poor and in apostolic zeal for the building up of the Church in unity, fraternity and fidelity to the saving truth of the Gospel.

In the pursuit of these noble goals, your Order, from its origins, has devoted great attention to the formation of its members as men of faith and family. Over the generations, the Knights have worked for the strengthening of family life through programs of catechesis and spiritual growth, borne public witness to the centrality of the family as the fundamental cell of society, and supported a variety of initiatives to support families in their indispensable social and educational mission. This historic commitment has included a particular concern for passing on the faith to new generations, instilling sound values and accompanying the young in their growth to maturity as men and women of integrity, wisdom and service to the communities in which they live. In his many writings and addresses to young people, the Holy Father has frequently warned them of the danger, in today's fluid and often frivolous society, of becoming severed from the religious and cultural roots that provide their deepest identity (cf. *Christus Vivit*, 179-186). For this reason, he wishes to encourage in a special way the Knights' “Cor” initiative and sends prayerful good wishes for its spiritual fruitfulness.

All missionary outreach has its heart and beating pulse in the presence of our Lord in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, offered for the peace and salvation of all the world (cf. Roman Missal, *Eucharistic Prayer III*). In this past year, the cross-country Eucharistic Pilgrimage in the United States, promoted by your Order, bore impressive witness not only to the Church's faith in the redemptive power of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, but also his constant accompaniment of the Church on her pilgrimage through history. In these times marked by new wars, conflicts and social unrest, the Holy Father has been untiring in calling all Christians to pray for justice, peace and reconciliation in our human family. He asks the Knights and their families to persevere in offering their prayers and Masses for the triumph of Christ's peace in the hearts of all people and the building of the civilization of love.

Once again, the Holy Father takes this occasion to express his profound gratitude to the Knights of Columbus for their concrete witness to the faith that works through love (cf. *Gal 5:6*). Together with the charitable activities of its local Councils worldwide, your Order continues to give outstanding support and encouragement to efforts to defend God's gift of life at every stage of its development, to uphold the dignity of the institution of marriage, and to advance the mission of the Church in developing countries. His Holiness is likewise grateful for the efforts of the Knights to care for the needs of our brothers and sisters in war-torn Ukraine, the Christian communities of the Middle East, and all those experiencing persecution for their faith in Christ; these are causes especially close to his heart as Pastor of the Universal Church.

In these months, the Church is preparing spiritually for the forthcoming Jubilee Year, when countless pilgrims will pass through the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica to encounter the richness of the Lord's mercies poured out upon our world through her apostolic ministry. It is the Holy Father's hope that as they contemplate the great

Bernini *baldacchino* that soars above the Tomb of Saint Peter, even now being restored to its original splendor through the generosity of the Knights of Columbus, they will be strengthened in faith and in unity with the Successor of Peter. His Holiness prays that the graces of the Holy Year will be poured out in abundance on the Knights and their families as they strive to fulfil their baptismal mission to be a leaven of peace and holiness in our human family, weary of war and yearning for the peace that only Christ can give (cf. *Jn* 15:27).

With these sentiments, His Holiness commends the deliberations of the Convention to the loving intercession of Our Lady, Mother of the Church, and he cordially imparts to the Knights and their families his Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.

Yours sincerely,



Pietro Cardinal Parolin

Secretary of State

Mr. Patrick E. Kelly
Supreme Knight
Knights of Columbus
1 Columbus Plaza
New Haven, CT 06510-3326

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS AT A GLANCE

Insurance

- New life insurance issued: \$7.5B
- Annualized premiums from life insurance sales: \$116M
- New life certificates: 42,061
- Certificates in force: 1,716,315
- Agents: 1,022
- Standard & Poor's rating: AA+
- A.M. Best rating: A+ (Superior)
- Members who keep their policies: 96%
- Net income: \$55M
- Surplus: \$2.8B

Culture of Life

- Ultrasound machines: 1,865
- Value of machines: \$88.9M
- ASAP donations: \$5,074,679
- ASAP Pregnancy Resource Centers & Maternity Homes supported: 1,224
- ASAP councils & assemblies participating: 1,636

Charity

- Total donations: \$193M
- Total volunteer hours: 47.5M
- Persecuted Christians Fund: (\$33.1M since 2014)
- Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids: 224,696
- Food drives: \$11.7M
- Special Olympics: \$4.6M
- Habitat for Humanity: \$726,849
- Wheelchairs: 11,903 (139,087 since 2003)
- Blood donors: 288,845
- Scholarships: \$7.6M from councils

Investments

- Total assets: \$30.3B
- Amount invested daily: \$7.5M (2023)
- Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors clients: 2,805
- *ChurchLoan* portfolio: \$86.9M

Fourth Degree

- Sir Knights: 371,426
- Assemblies: 3,676

Church

- Vicarius Christi Fund donation: \$1.6M (in 2023)
- Vicarius Christi Fund cumulative total: \$68.8M (since 1982)
- RSVP donations: \$4.1M (in 2023)
- RSVP cumulative total: \$97.8M
- Total K of C units participating in RSVP: 2,704

Membership

- Total members: 2,136,963
- Intake for 2023-24 Fraternal Year: 92,481 (102.8% of 90,000 goal)
- Total councils: 16,896
- College Knights: 33,927
- College councils: 332
- eMembers: 34,363 for 2023-2024 (142,261 since inception)
- eMembers moved to councils: 22,846 for 2023-2024 (85,840 since inception)

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Supreme Knight

ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM E. LORI

Supreme Chaplain

ARTHUR L. PETERS

Deputy Supreme Knight

PATRICK T. MASON

Supreme Secretary

RONALD F. SCHWARZ

Supreme Treasurer

JOHN A. MARRELLA

Supreme Advocate

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