

**Homily of Archbishop William E. Lori, S.T.D.
Supreme Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus
Votive Mass of the Sacred Heart
K of C State Deputies Installation
St. Mary Church, New Haven
June 10, 2022**

At the conclusion of this Holy Mass, many of you will be installed as State Deputies. I congratulate you on your election even as I pray that the new fraternal year will be especially fruitful and successful for each one of you.

As you begin this new and important responsibility in the life of the Knights of Columbus, I would ask that we focus for a moment on our founder, Blessed Michael McGivney.

In particular, I would like to call attention to his devotion to the Sacred Heart, and invite you to view your responsibilities through that privileged lens.

As young Michael McGivney came of age and entered the seminary, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Sacred Heart of Mary was popular.

Many homes, especially those of Irish-Americans, were decorated with framed prints of the images of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and it is quite possible that those images could be found in the McGivney household.

Not many of Father McGivney's letters survive, but one of them that does survive, written to a priest, closes with the words, "Yours truly in the Sacred Heart."

When young Father McGivney accompanied Chip Smith to the gallows, Chip wore a Sacred Heart Badge, given him by Father McGivney himself.

These are indications of Father McGivney's warm devotion to the Sacred Heart, but perhaps the strongest indication was Father McGivney's ardent pastoral love. As we read about and meditate on Father McGivney's tireless pastoral labors, we can easily see that he exemplified St. John Vianney's description of the priesthood: "The priesthood," said the Cure of Ars, "is the love of the heart of Christ."

Father McGivney's active priestly love flowed from the heart of Christ, and it attracted the people that he served to the heart of the Divine Savior, described by the Church as "an abyss of charity," a bottomless charity.

Three Principles of the Order and the Heart of Jesus

Father McGivney drew the foundational principles of the Order from the Heart of Jesus, to whom he had such a warm devotion, and to whom as a priest, he was sacramentally configured. Yes, in the Heart of Jesus, Father McGivney found an infinite love, not only for humanity in general, but for each person individually. As he prayed the Divine Office and celebrated the Mass and the sacraments, Father McGivney absorbed the love flowing from the heart of Christ and allowed that love to transform him from the inside out, enabling him to have that purity of heart Jesus calls us to in today's Gospel. In moments of quiet prayer, Father McGivney listened to the voice of the Shepherd, a voice that did not blaze out or shout, but whispered tenderly, as the Heart of Jesus spoke to his priestly heart.

When the Holy Spirit inspired Father McGivney to found the Knights of Columbus, is it any wonder that he made charity, the charity of the Heart of Christ, the foundational principle of his new and imaginative endeavor?

By his tireless pastoral love, Father McGivney drew many to the heart of Christ, where they discovered their deepest desire — the deepest desire of their hearts for union with God, a charity of love that expresses itself in the works of charity done by the Order as a whole and by so many of our state councils and individual local councils, and by individual Knights and their families ...

Dear State Deputies, to be truly successful, you, like Father McGivney, must listen to the voice of the Shepherd in prayer. Allow his Sacred Heart to speak to your hearts, so that your every relationship, your every endeavor, will always be rooted in the love of the heart of Christ.

And in the spirit of Blessed Michael McGivney, always endeavor to exemplify that charity, for ultimately, it is love alone that enables us to give credible witness to Christ and the Gospel.

As Father McGivney grew in holiness, the Sacred Heart of Jesus drew him into a beautiful union with God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. As this very busy parish priest went about his endless duties,

as he dealt with difficult situations and fractious personalities, his life was grounded in the unity of the One God in Three Persons.

From his deep and personal union with Christ, he was drawn into the unity of the Trinity and it became the source of his ministry as a unifier — a unifier of this bustling parish and a unifier among his brother Knights.

The grace flowing from the Heart of Christ made him more than a natural leader; he became a convincing witness to the unity of the God who is love. This, too, sheds light on Father McGivney's decision to make unity one of the Order's founding principles.

Dear State Deputies, as you contemplate the year ahead, you can easily see that in various ways, you will need to be unifiers in your jurisdictions, and perhaps deal with those who might weaken or threaten the unity of the Order.

Like Father McGivney, please do allow the Sacred Heart to lead you to share more deeply in the unity of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the love of the One God in Three Persons.

Here is the secret source of the patience and wisdom that you will need not only to deal with people who might be fractious, but even more importantly, to engender that wholehearted cooperation in your jurisdictions that you will need to be successful.

I've already spoken of Father McGivney's loving pastoral care for the needs of others, but let us reflect a bit more on the source of his care and attention to the needs of others.

That source was indeed the Heart of Jesus, who drew him into a living relationship with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

There, in the heart of the Trinity, Father McGivney discovered the self-giving love of each of the three Divine Persons — one for another.

There, in the heart of Christ, Father McGivney experienced "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit," which became the ultimate source of our principle of fraternity — that is to say, our solidarity with those in need and our fellowship and care for one another and our families.

According to Father McGivney's vision for our Order, we claim those who are in need as our brothers and our sisters, and we look out for one another as brothers and as families united in the Lord and the fellowship of the Church.

This extends not only to our material well-being but our spiritual well-being.

So, State Deputies, as we look to the year that lies ahead, remember that we call it a "fraternal" year – a time to build fraternity with new members and a time to deepen our fraternity by ties of faith and by ties of friendship.

May you find wisdom and strength in the Heart of Christ to build fraternity in your jurisdictions in the time that lies ahead.

Conclusion

So, with renewed congratulations, I wish each of you a wonderful fraternal year and pray that you, your families, and your fellow Knights will be drawn, by the prayers of our founders, into the Heart of Christ, the source of our charity, our unity, and our fraternity.

May God bless you and keep you always in his love!
Blessed Michael McGivney, pray for us. Vivat Jesus!