



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight's Awards Session Held on Eve of 142nd Supreme Convention**

*Awards Session recognizes outstanding Knights and councils and includes  
performance by award-winning Canadian folk band Leahy*

**Québec City** — The Knights of Columbus welcomed more than 2,500 Knights and their families, members of the Catholic hierarchy and special guests from 10 countries to its 142nd Supreme Convention in Québec City, Québec at the Supreme Knight's Award Session. The awards session annually recognizes individual Knights, councils, assemblies and jurisdictions throughout the world who have faithfully carried out the mission of the Order's Founder, Blessed Michael McGivney. These honorees exemplify how Knights live their faith in service to their family, parish, community and country through charitable outreach, fraternal leadership, membership growth and retention, and insurance sales and service.

Guests at the Supreme Knight's Awards Session also enjoyed a performance by award-winning Canadian folk band Leahy. Over the course of their notable career, Leahy has received several Juno Awards, which recognize outstanding achievements in Canada's music industry, including Best New Group, Best Instrumental Artist, and Best Country Group or Duo.

In addition, Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly presented the annual International Program Awards. The Annual International Program Awards competition recognizes councils that conduct an outstanding program in each of the Faith in Action program categories: faith, family, community and life. The first-place winners and a brief description of their activity can be found below:

### **Faith Programs**

**St. Thomas Aquinas Council 15294**  
**Southeast Missouri State University**  
**Cape Girardeau, Missouri**  
*Anima Christi '24*

In March of this year, 50 members of St. Thomas Aquinas Council 15294 hosted a week-long Eucharistic Pilgrimage with the goal of fostering greater devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

More than 600 pilgrims participated, and the pilgrimage spanned the entire length of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau in Southern Missouri.

The pilgrimage made stops at 22 parishes in the diocese and included all-night Eucharistic Adoration, Holy Hours, and 13 Eucharistic Processions. On the last day of the pilgrimage, Mass was celebrated by Most Rev. Edward Rice, the bishop of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, followed by the final Eucharistic Procession of the week. This procession included Fourth Degree Knights as well as other Knights from across the state. Through social media, the procession received 80,000 views from people across the world, making an impact far beyond Missouri.

### **Family Programs**

#### **Mason Council 9182**

##### **Mason, Michigan**

##### ***Tragic Farm Accident***

After a tragic farm accident killed Jason McMahon of Council 9182, his brother Knights came to his family's aid, providing help on their farm and funds for immediate expenses. Desiring to do more, the council held a pig roast to raise money for the children's education fund. More than 500 people attended the event, which began with Mass, and also included a band, games, rides, a raffle, a silent auction, and more. Thanks to its efforts, the council presented the family with a check for \$30,000. The event brought together the entire community in a time of disaster and grief.

#### **Our Lady of Guadalupe Council 17913**

##### **Lviv, Ukraine**

##### ***Support of a Family-Type Orphanage***

Council 17913 launched a program to support a foster home in the village of Bortnyki, Stryi district, Lviv region. The program's main goal was material, spiritual, and psychological support for the children in the home. As part of this program, the council set itself the following tasks: provide all children with winter jackets, multi-season shoes, sweets, and other food products. An important part of this program was joint participation in the Eucharist, prayer activities, and fellowship.

### **Community Programs**

#### **Pope Pius XII Council 5295**

##### **Narragansett, Rhode Island**

##### ***Jacob's Ladder, Men on a Mission***

Council 5295 established a partnership with Jacob's Ladder, an orphanage in Jamaica, to help care for children and adults with developmental and physical disabilities. Council members take annual mission trips to the facility, helping with construction and repair projects, participating in

spiritual activities, such as Mass and daily prayer, and organizing recreational activities for residents.

The council organized the shipment of seven 40-foot shipping containers to the facility, containing adult diapers, clothing and other goods, valued at over \$200,000. The council has also helped to replace the roof, paint the facility, and provide plumbing services. Additionally, with support from other donors, the council provided water heaters, washing machines, golf carts for transportation around the grounds, and an aquaponics system to the facility. Overall, the value of support from the council is nearly \$500,000, and their service to the facility's residents continues today, with planning for new projects already underway.

### **Life Programs**

#### **Pope St. John XXIII Council 15968**

**Spokane, WA, USA**

#### ***Recovery Program for Newborns***

Council 15968 contributed 450 volunteer hours and \$6,500 to constructing shelf storage and assembling 24 backpacks filled with baby supplies for a local clinic called Maddie's Place. Maddie's Place is 1 of 3 clinics in the U.S. that provide a recovery nursery for babies experiencing withdrawal due to prenatal substance abuse. The clinic also provides non-judgmental care and housing for their mothers.

The council received the shelving units from a local grocery store and installed them for the clinic. To collect donations for the backpacks, the council introduced Maddie's Place staff to parishioners during six Lenten fish dinners that followed the Stations of the Cross. The backpacks were filled with necessities purchased by the council, such as baby bottles, baby wash, diaper rash ointment, a baby grooming kit and more. The council also donated funds collected during the dinners to the center through the Orders' ASAP (Aid and Support After Pregnancy) program.

### **International Family of the Year**

The Ampe family – Joseph, his wife Tiffany, and their 11 children, Kelsey (22), Evan (20), Lucielle (18), Abigail (15), Sean (13), Ryan (11), Blaise (8), Mella Margaret (7), Cazimir (6), Henrik (5), and Isadora (4) – serve as a tremendous model of a faithful Catholic family.

Joseph is a member of Council 689 in Marquette, MI, and he has been a Knight for 6 years. He and his family are very active in their parish and community. Tiffany aids in faith formation, prayer groups, and ministries to the sick and needy, and the children are also involved in many of these functions.

The Ampe children are homeschooled, and their family lives a homestead lifestyle where they grow their own produce and raise their own farm animals. They also have a consistent family prayer life, praying the rosary together every evening.

In 2018, Joseph and Tiffany adopted two children with Down Syndrome from Ukraine while Tiffany was pregnant with Isadora. Initially, they had planned to only adopt one child from Ukraine, but after praying and discerning when they arrived in the country, they decided to adopt a second child. In 2023, the Ampe family adopted a third child from Ukraine, Zygmunt, and a year later they adopted a fourth son with special needs from Texas, named Quintis. The Ampe family's decision to adopt Zygmunt, Cazimir, Henrik and Quintis is a testament to their incredible generosity and selflessness.

Since the war in Ukraine began in 2022, the Ampe family has taken several trips to Ukraine and Poland to deliver over \$200,000 worth of medical supplies, clothing, toys, religious items, and money to Ukrainian hospitals struggling to serve victims of war.

The Ampe family's actions demonstrate that everything they do is rooted in faith and charity. Their family life serves as inspiration for every Catholic family.

### **Blessed Michael McGivney Medal**

This award is given annually to a Knights of Columbus chaplain whose priestly zeal and exemplary service are in the finest traditions of our Founder. The 2023-2024 recipient of the Blessed Michael McGivney Medal is:

**Very Rev. Chad Wilhelm**  
**State Chaplain of North Dakota**  
**Jamestown Council 1883**  
**Jamestown, North Dakota**

Fr. Wilhelm is a priest of the Diocese of Fargo who serves as the state chaplain of North Dakota, a position he has held for 27 consecutive years. Fr. Wilhelm also serves as the chaplain for Council #1883. In addition to his pastoral work with Knights and their families, he is also a prolific recruiter, having earned multiple "Top Recruiter Awards" for the Knights in North Dakota.

Fr. Wilhelm is a true teacher who fosters spiritual growth in the men of his council and parishioners. One practical way he does this is by leading a "Holy Half Hour" before monthly council meetings.

Moreover, Fr. Wilhelm started an altar server program at his parish, is instrumental in the council-parish "thrift store," and has played an essential role in remodeling his parish chapel and Catholic school.

He is also an avid supporter of his community. He is an advocate of his local women's pregnancy resource center, and he goes above and beyond to protect life. Additionally, he is the chaplain of the local fire department, Catholic Daughters, and the North Dakota State Highway Patrol.

Fr. Wilhelm is an exemplary model of a Catholic priest who is dedicated to his parishioners and brother Knights and spends himself in their service.

### **About the Knights of Columbus**

In 1882, Blessed Michael McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus to serve the needs of a largely immigrant Catholic community. What began as a small fraternal benefit society has since grown into the world's premier lay Catholic men's organization, with more than 2.1 million members in over 16,800 local councils. As members of one of the world's leading international charitable organizations, Knights around the world donated approximately 50 million service hours and nearly \$185 million for worthy causes in their communities in 2022. The Knights of Columbus also offers a range of life insurance products to members and their families and was named by Forbes as one of America's Best Insurance Companies 2024 in the permanent life insurance category. Knights of Columbus Insurance currently has more than \$123 billion\* of life insurance in force. In addition, the organization offers investment services in accord with Catholic social teaching through its wholly owned subsidiary, Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, which holds more than \$27 billion\*\* in assets under management. Based on the founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity, the Knights of Columbus is committed to strengthening Catholic families and parishes, and to practicing faith in action through service to all in need. To learn more or to join the Knights of Columbus, please visit [kofc.org/join](https://kofc.org/join).

\*As of December 31, 2023

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