

INVOCATION

JANUARY 2024



Honoring Our Veterans

Knights Honoring Veterans



Sir Knights from Our Lady of Charity Assembly 3089 have been honoring veterans who have no family members present since the Sarasota National Cemetery opened in May 2010.

For the past three years, SKs from Bishop Charles McLaughlin Assembly 1818 have joined in this worthwhile project.

The Veteran Funeral Project began in May 2010 soon after the Cemetery opened. Several funerals were held with no family in attendance to receive the flag. The Sarasota County Veterans Commission, of which Our Lady of Charity Assembly #3089 was an associate member, was asked if any of the various County Veterans organizations cared to take on this worthwhile project, that of receiving the flag.

SK Bob Marrah, the Assembly's Faithful Navigator at the time, agreed that the Fourth Degree Knights would be glad to do so. From that date on, whenever a Veteran's Funeral was upcoming and no family had claimed the body, the Cemetery then asked the Knights of Columbus to be there.

Gradually, more and more Sir Knights, friends and other Assemblies were signing up to be notified of an upcoming Veteran Funeral with no family. A total of 1,416 Veteran Funerals have been attended since May 2010. This past year, 303 SKs honored 272 vets at 12 funeral ceremonies, with an average of more than 25 SKs attending each ceremony.

Many an attending Sir Knight would often bring along a spouse or another Veteran/relative who had an interest in attending these very moving ceremonies. Those other folks are counted in these attendance statistics.

From the second or third year on, Veteran Funeral Coordinator Bob Marrah was often asked by the Cemetery Representative to select "a deserving person" to receive the flag. Frequent Knight attendees or special visitors were thus often called upon for this honor and they could choose to keep the flag or return it.

During the pandemic, strict guidelines went into place. Regular Veteran funerals were still being scheduled, but attendance was limited to 10 or less. So, no Funerals Ceremonies were scheduled for Veterans without families; burials

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continued to occur but without the benefit of any Military Veteran honors. The hiatus occurred over a span of more than 18 months from early March 2020 to mid-October 2021.

The VA then began to ease many of the pandemic restrictions. In addition, a new Cemetery Director had been appointed by the VA. His preference was not to highlight the Veterans labeled as “unclaimed” or “indigent.” There had been another long-standing monthly ceremony at the Cemetery called Direct Burials. Many Veterans who had moved to Florida to retire had their families “all up North.”

So, when that Veteran passed away in Florida, their remains or cremains were shipped north for viewing, religious ceremonies, etc. and then returned to Florida for burial. In the majority of those cases, no family members were present for the burial. This new Cemetery Director decided to combine the already occurring Direct Burials and added to those the Veterans whose remains were left unclaimed. This new monthly ceremony was to be called “No Veteran Forgotten” and is conducted by an American Legion or other Veterans Post. The first scheduled ceremony to render military honors to the Veterans, buried without the benefit of any family members present, occurred in October 2021.

Now, those combined Veteran Ceremonies are held once per month, on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. The names, ranks and specific service of each of the Veterans being honored are recited with the pealing of a bell after each name is read. Members of the Knights of Columbus are asked to read these names, and typically four-to-six Knights do so, depending on the total number of Veterans being recognized that day. A local American Legion Post usually oversees the entire service. They provide the Ceremony leader, a Chaplain, members to fold and present the flag plus a member plays TAPS and a group renders a rifle salute as well.

Our Lady of Charity Assembly has been fortunate to have Bishop Charles McLaughlin Assembly #1818 in Venice also regularly attend the services. It began in 2021, when the then Faithful Navigator SK Ed Farrell asked Funeral Coordinator Bob Marrah to attend one of their Venice Assembly meetings and give an overview of the Funeral Project. It was very well received and several of their Sir Knights now regularly attend the scheduled monthly Funerals.

For the calendar year 2023, there were 136 attendees #3089 and 167 from #1818, with 71 SKs represented.

A Very Successful First Half

By State Deputy Richard Hughes

I hope that you and your families have had a blessed Christmas season, and I wish all of you the best in this New Year! Overall, the Order here in Florida has had a very successful first-half of the Fraternal Year. Councils have been conducting many meaningful activities and programs in support of their parishes and communities. Membership recruitment has been robust--118 Councils are at 50% or more of their membership goals, and 47 Councils have already met or exceeded 100% of their membership goals. And there are many Councils initiating or exploring the new Cor initiative.

However, there is still some work to do for many Councils to meet Star Council goals.

--245 active Councils have not yet conducted or participated in a Fraternal Benefit Event--2 events are required for each Council with a total of 14 unique participants.

--228 active Councils are not yet Safe Environment Compliant.

--And 87 active Councils have yet to recruit a member this year.

If you find that your Council is behind, there is still plenty of time to meet your goals for Star Council. Each member should actively participate in their Council programs and activities and strive to bring the gift of membership to every Catholic man in their parish. Most men will respond better to a personal invitation to join, and that requires all members to do their part. Leaders should schedule and promote Fraternal Benefit Events and ensure that administrative requirements are met. These requirements are not difficult to meet—they just need some focus.

The Annual Fraternal Survey, Form 1728, is due to Supreme on January 31. This is another Star Council requirement, and it is critical that Supreme collects this information from every Council in the Order. Every member should submit

their volunteer hours to their Council to help with preparation of the form. Your Financial Secretary should be able to provide you with Form 1728A, which is an easy way to document your volunteer hours.

Our State Convention is coming up at the end of May and will again be held at the Hyatt Regency in Orlando. Councils should be conducting elections for Delegates January through March.

And for those of you that are interested in running for Delegate to the Supreme Convention in August—keep in mind that it will be held in Quebec City in Canada this year. That means that everyone traveling to the convention from outside Canada will need a passport. In addition, the Expiration Date on that passport can be no less than six months from the last day of travel. That means that if a Supreme Convention attendee will depart Canada on August 8 (the last day of the convention), the Expiration Date on their passport can be no earlier than February 8, 2025. So plan accordingly.

Please accept my sincere thanks for all that you do in the great work of the Order!



*State Deputy
Richard Hughes*



A New Phase of the Pro-Life Movement

By State Chaplain Very Rev. Bob Kantor

“The first and most fundamental of all human rights is the right to life, and when this right is denied all other rights are threatened ... A society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members; and among the most vulnerable are surely the unborn and the dying.” – St. John Paul II (May, 2000).

The overturn of the tragic Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision represented a victory for the cause of life, but the work of protecting preborn children is far from over.

As Knights of Columbus, we are challenged to address society’s failings in the respect of human life with prayer and action. On the action front, many Florida councils have funded ultrasound machines for maternity clinics in our state, allowing mothers to see the wonder of life developing in their wombs. Many have turned away from potential abortions as a result, saving countless lives. Our involvement in Special Olympics celebrates the intrinsic worth and dignity of every human being. Runs and walks for life organized by our councils call attention to and raise funds for life causes.

Prayer is another way to unite in support of life from the moment of conception until natural death. Whether done individually, in your families, in a group of brother Knights, or in your parishes, individual prayers, rosaries and novenas communicate to God and neighbor our commitment to life. The Bishops of Florida are calling us to a day of prayer for the legal protection of unborn children on Monday, January 22nd.

Progress has been made in Florida, but there are threats to measures now in place to protect the preborn. The Florida Supreme Court is considering a challenge to our state’s 15-week abortion limit. The legislature’s passage of a bill to further limit abortion to six-weeks of gestation during the 2023



State Chaplain
Very Rev. Bob Kantor

session and its approval by Governor DeSantis is a momentous achievement. This legislation also increases resources to pregnant women and young families through the Florida Pregnancy Care Network. If the 15-week law is upheld, the further limit to six weeks will go into effect thirty days later.

One potential threat to the cause of life in Florida is an extreme ballot initiative proposing to amend our state constitution to legalize full-term abortion. If ultimately passed, the amendment would legalize abortion up until birth, including when a baby can feel pain. As we

can see, the overturn of Roe v. Wade is not the end, but the beginning of a new states-centered phase of the pro-life movement. As Knights of Columbus, we can never tire of standing up for life, giving voice to those who cannot yet speak for themselves. Vivat Jesus (Jesus Lives) and so do babies in their mother’s wombs.



The Theophany

By Former State Chaplain Reverend Salvatore Pignato

A new year has begun, and the Eastern Church brought in the New Year with the celebration of the baptism of Jesus on January 6th. This is a great time to celebrate this great Feast because the New Year brings in thoughts of new resolutions for ourselves. You may ask yourself, "What do resolutions have to do with the baptism of Jesus?" The answer is that the baptism of Jesus is filled with resolutions. They are hidden in the Gospel narrative itself.

In the conferring of the Mystery/Sacrament of Baptism by the Eastern Church, the priest asks the parents and godparents three times, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ." The response made for the child to be baptized is 'I do believe in Jesus Christ.' That statement sums up our baptism vow and is a statement of belief and commitment in Jesus Christ who said in His Ascension, "Go teach all nations." This statement of belief is a summation of our resolutions for our lifetime.

To believe in Jesus Christ is to commit ourselves to His ministry. This is the first resolution taken

from His baptism. The focus of that ministry is multiform. The first is evangelization. That is, to make His name known to the world. To make is name known and therefore, the second resolution for us is to build up the Church, which is to preach, teach, and baptize others into the body of Christ. Belief

in Jesus Christ brings the final commitment or resolution, which the priest exhorts the child when he says, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" The parents and godparents once again answer, I do believe in Him, and the priest exhorts the child saying, "worship Him."

As we look at our resolutions for this year, it is important to review our baptismal vows and make sure that they are in sync with the commitments contained in the baptism of Jesus. Completing these lifetime commitments is the final resolution for us because it, at the end of our life, will remove the veil that St. Paul talks about and will allow us to see God clearly, yes, face to face.



Former State Chaplain
Rev. Salvatore Pignato



Being Truly Universal

by State Treasurer Joseph Coicou

The word Catholic comes from the Greek word *katholikos*, which means universal. As Catholics, we must invite all to be in the Body of Christ, the Catholic Church. As brother knights, we must invite all Catholic men to join our excellent Order. Over the years, the Knights of Columbus has expanded its mission to include charitable work, community service, and advocacy for various causes. Diversity and inclusion have also become essential aspects of the organization's history and mission. The Knights of Columbus has made efforts to be more inclusive and diverse.

A brief overview of the history of diversity within the organization:

Racial and Ethnic Diversity: The Knights of Columbus began as an organization primarily for Irish Catholic immigrants in the United States. However, over the years, the organization has welcomed members from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Today, the Knights of Columbus has a diverse membership that includes individuals of different ethnicities, such as Irish, Italian, Hispanic, Black American, Caribbean, Asian, and more.

Expansion Beyond the United States: The Knights of Columbus is an international organization with members in many countries worldwide. This global presence has naturally led to a more diverse membership base.

Inclusivity: The organization's commitment to Catholicism and charity has transcended racial and ethnic boundaries. The Knights of Columbus has welcomed members from diverse backgrounds who share the same values and are committed to serving their communities and the Church.

Recruiting Multi-Ethnic or Multi-Cultural Catholic Men:

Recruiting a diverse membership is crucial for the Knights of Columbus to continue its mission

of service and charity. Here are some strategies to recruit multi-ethnic or multi-cultural Catholic men:

Cultural Outreach:

Reach out to various cultural and ethnic communities within your local parish or region. Attend events, festivals, or gatherings that celebrate different cultures.

Establish connections and build relationships with individuals interested in joining the Knights.

Multilingual Communication: Ensure your recruitment materials and communication are available in multiple languages. This will make information about the organization more accessible to potential members from diverse backgrounds.

Inclusivity Training: Train current members on the importance of inclusivity and how to create a welcoming environment for individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This can include sensitivity training and cultural competency education.

Collaborate with Local Catholic Organizations: Partner with other Catholic organizations with diverse membership. This can help you access a wider pool of potential recruits.

Community Service: Engage in community service projects relevant to the needs of different ethnic and cultural communities. Show that the Knights of Columbus is committed to positively impacting all communities.

Personal Outreach: Encourage current members to invite friends and acquaintances from different backgrounds to join the organization. Personal recommendations and relationships can be powerful in recruitment.



State Treasurer
Joseph Coicou

Social Media and Online Presence: Utilize social media and create an online presence that reflects the organization's diversity. Share stories and content that highlight the experiences of multi-ethnic or multi-cultural members.

Cultural Events and Celebrations: Host events or celebrations that showcase the diversity within the organization. This can help potential members feel a sense of belonging.

Leadership Opportunities: Encourage members from diverse backgrounds to take leadership roles within the Knights of Columbus. Representation at all levels of the organization can attract a more diverse membership.

Clear Mission and Values: Communicate the mission and values of the Knights of Columbus, emphasizing the organization's commitment to service, charity, and the Catholic faith, which can resonate with individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

By actively promoting diversity and inclusivity and implementing these recruitment strategies, the Knights of Columbus can continue expanding its membership and fulfilling its mission of serving the Church and the broader community. The Florida State Council is here to help. The State Council has a [Hispanic and Haitian membership team](#) waiting to serve and help your council.

Getting Ready For the State Convention

by State Warden Ed Sleyzak

As we start the new year, we get rid of the old and start fresh. The Florida State Council had a great 2023 with reaching the Circle of Honor under ISPD Robert Urrutia and we are near the 60% mark already for our State Deputy Richard Hughes. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication with building the up the Church.

There are a few that we still need to get updated as we start the new year and start to prepare for the upcoming State Convention. Yes, the convention is upon us.

We need to make sure that all the Rosters for the Councils and Assemblies are current on the State website. We know that the Supreme Rosters are current, but have you updated your Roster on the State Website? This needs to be done at least every 2 months. Why do you need to update your Rosters?

1) IF you have a lot of new members and they want to become an Officer they cannot be added to the Officers list on the State website, thus, not having access to information.

2) You will not be able to select them as Delegates as they will not be listed on your Council.

3) They will not be able to register as delegates to the State Convention.

4) If you cannot add them as Officers on the State website, then they will miss out on a lot of information that is sent out to the Officers from the State.

Have you updated your Officers for the 2023-2024 Fraternal year on the State Website. IF you have not, please look and make sure they are current. If you did not update them when they were elected, then they have been missing out on a lot of information.

Please review the above-mentioned items this month to be sure they are current.

Keep your eyes open for information for the 2024 State Convention as it will be here before you know.



*State Warden
Ed Sleyzak*

Supreme Chaplain's Challenge

By Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William E. Lori

Jesus rebuked him and said, “Quiet! Come out of him!” The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. All were amazed and asked one another, “What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.” (Gospel for Jan. 28, Mk 1:25-27)

The unclean spirit immediately recognizes Jesus as the Christ and is aware of his power. As St. James tells us, “You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble” (Jas 2:19). We must not take for granted who Jesus is, his presence in our midst and the power he has to help us. Let us always recognize that Jesus is

actively working in our lives and seek him daily in our prayer.

Challenge by Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William E. Lori:

This month, I challenge you to attend Mass and receive holy Communion more often than just on Sunday — daily if possible — to grow in awareness of Jesus’ presence and power in the Eucharist.

Questions for Reflection:

Do you take the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist for granted? Does the way you dress for Mass reflect that Jesus is present? Do you remain conscious throughout each day of Jesus’ activity in your life and turn to him frequently in prayer?

Knights Pack Up Decorations



*Knights from **Prince of Peace Council 8791** of Ormond Beach made quick work of their annual job of packing up the Christmas decorations from the church and parish hall.*

Aided by a large group of volunteers, the Knights did the work in one morning, finishing up by 12:30 p.m. This was despite the race that the number and quality of the decorations continues to grow.

Among the Knights contributing were Mo Laffin, Mark Derouaux, Jay Young, Ed Bodigheimer, Ron Piasecki, Jack Erthal, Leon Consolatore, Fred Weston, Mark Leary and Mike Worley, working with Prince of Peace Arts & Environment coordinator Carmen O'Reilly.

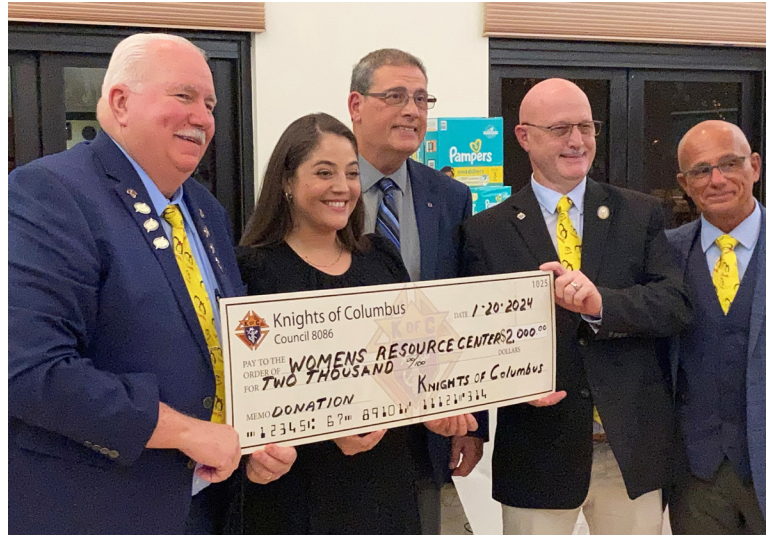
An Evening With the Knights

Council 8086 kicked off activities for the eighth annual Terry Cassidy Memorial Coastal Laps for Life with a special “An Evening with the Knights” at the Our Lady of Hope Father Raymond O’Leary Parish Hall.

The main event will be held on Saturday, March 23, at 9:15 a.m. at the Father Lopez Catholic High School track in Daytona Beach.

The hot hors d’ouvres affair had more than 85 in attendance, raising \$7,200 to get funding underway to help purchase and place ultrasound machines to deserving faith-based women’s centers. Representing the Knights were councils 8086, Father Downey Council 4934 of Sacred Heart Church in New Smyrna Beach; and Monsignor Bishop Council 2112 of Orlando.

Speakers at the event included Paola Sanchez, executive director of Resources for Women in Daytona Beach; Janette Ghioto, executive director of Mayfair Women’s Clinic of Jacksonville; Bob Perron of JMJ Pregnancy Center, Kissimmee/Orlando; and Jessica Deese, executive director of Grace House Pregnancy Resource Center of Deland. The Grace House mobile unit – which includes a portable ultrasound placed by Coastal Laps for Life – was on display outside the parish hall. Other special guests included Barbara



Cassidy, widow of former Coastal Laps for Life director and District Deputy Terry Cassidy, and their daughter Erin, a Father Lopez student who will sing the National Anthem prior to the walk.

Vito Benedetto, Council 8086 Chancellor and Coastal Laps for Life director, welcomed the crowd. Other speakers included 8086 Grand Knight Roger Packard and program director Tim Mell; along with Our Lady of Hope pastor Father Matthew Mello. Representing Council 4934 were Chaplain Father Aldren Nunez, Grand Knight Leo Decker and Life Director Richard Ross.

For additional information, to donate or to sign up to participate, please visit www.coastallaps4life.org.



Knights from **Port Orange Councils 12569** (Church of the Epiphany) and 8086 (Our Lady of Hope) teamed in December to provide a Christmas luncheon for Special Olympics athletes, coaches and volunteers. Knights from the two councils gathered donated food during the morning, and then served lunch at the Epiphany parish hall. The event continued a tradition that began in 2011. A highlight was the donation of a check for \$1,000 from Council 8086, presented by Grand Knight Roger Packard, Special Olympics point of contact Tony Manzolillo, and service program director Tim Mell.

Council Distributes Food and Toys



Council 10055 celebrates with Columbian Squires, combine Thanksgiving and Christmas distribution to several missions. The long-standing tradition of food and toys distribution continues strong. The groups gathered six missions in the region in one location at Nuestra Señora de Altigracia to distribute over \$8,000.00 in gift cards redeemable for food and toys. The participants were pre-registered at their missions.

The families had been previously screened and selected by leaders at the missions and were there to receive the envelopes and bags in the festive ceremony. The homebound were visited and taken their contributions that afternoon. The ceremony included prayer, gospel readings, the meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas and the mandatory carols to maintain the tradition that the Knights and Squires have upheld for decades.

A good time was had by all and the true meaning of both holidays permeated the missions and the people involved.

EL CONSEJO 10055 CELEBRA CON LOS ESCUEROS COLOMBIANO 3877 Y COMBINA ACCIÓN DE GRACIAS Y DISTRIBUCIÓN DE NAVIDAD EN VARIAS MISIONES

La larga tradición de distribución de alimentos y juguetes del Consejo 10055, San Marcelino Champagnat y los Escuderos 3877 continúa fuerte. Los grupos reunieron seis misiones en la región en un solo lugar en Nuestra Señora de Altigracia para distribuir más de \$8,000.00 en tarjetas de regalo canjeables por alimentos y juguetes. Los participantes fueron preinscritos en sus misiones.

Las familias habían sido previamente seleccionadas por los líderes de las misiones y estaban allí para recibir los sobres y las bolsas en la ceremonia festiva. Los confinados en sus hogares fueron visitados y recibieron sus contribuciones esa tarde. La ceremonia incluyó oración, lecturas del evangelio, el significado de Acción de Gracias y Navidad y los villancicos obligatorios para mantener la tradición que los Caballeros y Escuderos han sostenido durante décadas.5

Todos pasamos un buen rato y el verdadero significado de ambas festividades impregnó las misiones y las personas involucradas.

San Marcelino Champagnat Council 10055 continúe distribución a homeless

Every three months, Council 10055 distributes food and other items to various homeless locations in the downtown area of Miami. Over \$1,000 of donations from the council and others are sorted out and brought to the designated locations in a caravan that leaves early on a predetermined Saturday from the St. Brendan Church parking lot. The latest distributing was jackets and blankets, given the upcoming cold snap. Other distributions have included toiletries, food and applicable items according to the season.

CONCEJO 10055 SAN MARCELINO CHAMPAGNAT CONTINÚA DISTRIBUCIÓN TRIMESTRAL.

Cada tres meses, el Consejo 1005 distribuye alimentos y otros artículos a varios lugares para



de \$1,000 en donaciones del consejo y otros se clasifican y se llevan a los lugares designados en una caravana que sale temprano un sábado predeterminado desde el estacionamiento de la Iglesia St. Brendan. Lo último que se distribuyó fueron chaquetas y mantas, dada la inminente ola de frío. Otras distribuciones incluyen artículos de tocador, alimentos y artículos aplicables según la temporada.



Council Delivers Wheelchairs

Steve Sinclair, Advocate of St. Louis Council 14730, in conjunction with our Florida State Secretary Mike Gizewski, coordinated an effort to deliver 75 wheelchairs from West Palm Beach to the Veterans Administration hospital in Miami. Sending out a call for help to our members, Steve was joined by 5 others, including our District Deputy Tom Visney, Brother's Raul Rodriguez, Juan Coro, Mark Abell and Alex Mion and they went to Palm beach and picked up the chairs and successfully delivered them to the VA Hospital in Miami where they were assisted by VA Director Mernie Williams, who was very appreciative of the donation. We are thankful to our Brothers for their help and for the opportunity to participate in such a worthy cause. Thanks to the efforts and the network of The Knights of Columbus, many of our veterans will receive the gift of mobility.

Challenging The Seasonal Demands

“Improving Emotional and Spiritual Aspects of Celebrating the Holidays.”

This covers what many people experience particularly during the holiday season and with the particular intention to provide some sense of ease in dealing with the stress and pressures that seem to arrive at this time of the year.

We were privileged to have two highly respected individuals: Dr. Elssy Oms, MD and Father Timothy Canaan, M.Div., M.A., to address this seminar to the many diverse parishioners who attended.

Dr. Oms is board certified in General Psychiatry and Child Adolescent Psychiatry and has previously served as the Vice Chair of Psychiatry at JFK North Medical Center in West Palm Beach.

Father Canaan has served the Diocese of Ogdensburg as Vocations Director, Director of Admissions of Wadhams Hall Seminary and as College and Director of Campus Ministry. He has preached numerous parish missions including at Emmanuel Parish where we are proud of his weekly participation at our weekly and Sunday masses.

Dr. Oms provided an introspective audio/video presentation of various topics dealing with the emotional feelings and ways to reduce stress usually experienced at this time of the year

In one of her topics, Dr. Oms explained that not all stressors are within our control, but some are; that putting too much on your plate may increase one’s stress load and limit the amount of time spent on self-care. One way she emphasized to help reduce stress may be to say “no” more often. This is especially true if you take on more than you can handle because juggling many responsibilities, especially during this Christmas season, may leave you feeling overwhelmed. Indeed she went so far to say that “NO” is in fact a complete sentence requiring no further detail or explanation; that creating boundaries — especially with people

who add to your stress levels — is a healthy way to protect your well-being.

She also went on to explain that exercise, a balanced diet, and more time out for meditation and prayer along with more time with family and friends could and would go a very long way to dealing with and reducing stress.

Even Father Canaan recounted to us that he himself went through some difficult and troubling periods in his life, But, in the telling us of his personal experiences and struggles he indeed provided emotional and spiritual encouragement to all of us listening to what he had encountered and how he overcame them particularly through prayer and the help of the Holy Spirit.

It was a much uplifting and rewarding seminar. Dr. Oms and Fr. Canaan indeed connected with each of us attending and their answers to questions were concise and on point. In addition to them both, much thanks also need go to our Faith Director, Armando Minutoli, who chaired the occasion and to our Council Treasurer, Peter Cavanaugh, who co-chaired along with Past Grand Knight and Membership Chairman Chuck Dolce who arranged for the refreshments.

All in all, the seminar was a huge success, close to one-hundred fifty knights and parishioners attended and all left with a strong feeling of composure, with a heightened sense of well-being and gratitude to what had been presented and with what each of those in attendance experienced. Brother Armando, who was exceedingly happy about the turn-out, said that they intend to promote similar events in the future that encourage physical and spiritual well-being for the knights and parishioners alike.

Council Presents Scholarships

Four Knights from Council 8086 and Assembly 2794, Port Orange, traveled to Ft. Stewart, GA on January 4, 2024, to present five \$1,000 scholarships to further educate members of the active-duty 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry (Cottonbalers), 3rd Infantry Division, 18th Airborne Corps, U.S. Army.



Five members of the Cottonbaler 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry family were awarded The General Jim and Pat Boswell Scholarship presented by veteran organization 7th Infantry Regiment Association. 7th Infantry Regiment Association President is LTC (retired) David Jensen from Alabama, gave a motivational speech to the 650 plus Infantry troops about the 7th Infantry history and why being a Cottonbaler is so important.

Representing the 7th Infantry Regiment Association and Knights of Columbus were retired veterans LTC Ernie Jackson, LTC Dave Vaden, 2nd Lt Miguel Nin and Sp4 Tom Mies. Scholarships were made available through on-going donations to the Regiment at 7thinfrgassoc.com.

Recipients of Cottonbaler scholarships awards were Sgt. Yader Rodriguez, Sgt. Cole Vento, military spouse Ruth Dinkins, and family members Logan Dore and Caelin Jones,

The “Cottonbalers” earned their nickname during the 1814 Battle of New Orleans when General Jackson and his troops beat the British in a land and sea fight, using Cottonbales to protect the U.S. Army from British gunfire and to elevate the U.S. Army artillery pieces to gain range on British forces. This victory made General Jackson a war hero and later helped him become president of the USA.

7th Infantry Regiment Association Scholarship Chairman SK Ernie Jackson said, “We were all very impressed with the quality of our U.S. Army soldiers, their war-fighting equipment. This made us feel comfortable that our country is in good hands with highly motivated and professional soldiers. It was an honor to visit with them and present these educational scholarships. We look forward to providing more scholarships and supporting the outstanding men and women of our county’s active duty fighting force.”



Knights Distribute Coats

Our Lady Queen of Peace Knights of Columbus Council 11680 of New Port Richey recently distributed 504 warm winter jackets to needy students attending Marlowe Elementary and Gulf Middle Schools and children in the Pasco Foster Child Program. This was the fourth year in a row that the Knights had distributed winter jackets to needy West Pasco school children bringing the total number of jackets distributed over four years to 2,112.

“This program is possible because of the more than 120 donations ranging from \$15 to \$1,000 we received from local businesses, individuals and Our Lady Queen of Peace parishioners during our fall fund raising drive,” stated Tim Couzins, Chair of the Coats for Kids Program.

The Knights were assisted by the School Resource Officers and Principals at each of the schools and the Weeki Wachee Kiwanis Club at the annual “Polar Express” event for Pasco County foster children. Liz Kuhns, Parent Engagement Coordinator of Gulf Middle School noted, “With 85% of our students on free and reduced lunch, many students are in need of basic necessities such as clothing and these jackets and hats will help keep our students warm and healthy.” Dana Cutlif, Coordinator of the Weeki Wachee Kiwanis’ Polar Express event for Foster Children added, “Helping Foster Children who have very little is



important at this time of year and with support and assistance of the Knights of Columbus, the foster kids who took part in our event received a jacket that was theirs which was a true blessing.”

When asked why the Knights of Columbus are so committed to this program, Bill Shustowski, Jr., Grand Knight, stated, “These children are our future and supporting them in this manner, one child at a time is not only important for each one of them but also for our community as a whole.” For more information on the Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids Program contact Bill Shustowski, at Knights of Columbus 11680, 5340 High Street, New Port Richey, FL 34652



Knights Give Back to the Community



Panama City Knights of Columbus Councils 11850 Father Brandon Heaslip and 3599 Father Joseph M. Baker were busy recently, making more than 100 meals to feed local seniors.

With about one hundred and thirty meals, the food went to meals on wheels which were given out at the Council of Aging and to the homeless.

The Knights of Columbus said they do it to not only help those in need, but also to inspire others to get involved in their community.

The Knights didn't stop there, they also presented a check of \$2,000 to the Habitat for

Humanity in Bay County. The Knights said they raised the money through different events.

They said this is the first check they've given to Habitat for Humanity, and that they want to branch out to help more people.

Council 11850 Grand Knight Tom Fagan said, "It goes into that family's life, and they're just blown away. You see him so happy and a lot of times in tears because it means so much to them."

See the local newscast by clicking this link:

<https://www.wjhg.com/2023/12/24/knights-columbus-gives-back/>



2024 State Convention

The 120th Annual Convention of the Knights of Columbus Florida State Council will be held May 24 – 26, 2024 at Hyatt Regency Orlando, 9801 International Drive, Orlando, Florida 32819 USA.

The Florida State Council By-Laws require that each Subordinate Council elect two (2) Delegates and two (2) Alternate Delegates not earlier than the first meeting in January 2024, nor later than the first regular business meeting in March 2024. The first Delegate should be the current Grand Knight, and the second Delegate should be a Past Grand Knight of the Council.

If a Council has no Past Grand Knight, a Third-Degree Member in good standing may be a Delegate. The two (2) Alternate Delegates (one for the Grand Knight and one for the Past Grand Knight) must each be a Third-Degree member in good standing and must also be elected. Alternate Delegates are not required to be Past Grand Knights. *Please note that Councils must be in good standing with the Supreme Council and State Council in order to send Delegates to the State Convention. That means that both Supreme and State per capita payments are up-to-date!*

Upon completion of the election of Delegates, the Council Financial Secretary will complete the online Election of Delegates Form by logging into the Florida State Council Website at www.floridakofc.org, going to the Council's Division Management page, and clicking on the Election of Delegates button. Only the Council Financial Secretary may enter this information on the website. In order to access the State Convention Section of the State Website, the user must be registered on the website. The website is expected to be available for completion of Election of Delegates forms on January 15, 2024.

Entering the Election of Delegates form does NOT register the Delegates; it just authorizes which individuals may register as Delegates. Each Delegate or other member attending the State Convention must individually register on

the State website. The website will not recognize any Council Member attempting to register as a Delegate for the State Convention until the Financial Secretary has completed the Council's Election of Delegates Form. The Financial Secretary is urged to complete the Council's Election of Delegates Form as soon as possible after the date of the election, but not later than March 31, 2024. Once the form is completed, an email should be sent by the system to each Delegate and Alternate on the Election of Delegates form. *If a Council is NOT planning to attend the State Convention, the Election of Delegates Form must still be completed with the check box at the bottom of the form marked indicating that your Council will NOT be represented.*

The Financial Secretary's online report of the Election of Delegates is an official communication of your Council and the Financial Secretary's registration and reporting using the State Website constitutes the official SEAL affixed thereto. After the Financial Secretary has completed the Council's Election of Delegates Form on the State Website, he should notify the Council's Delegates as soon as possible that they can now register for the State Convention.

Worthy Grand Knight, your prompt attention to this matter is extremely important. Please ensure that the online Election of Delegates Form is completed before **March 31, 2024**. If you, the Council Financial Secretary or any member of your Council have difficulty registering on the State Website or navigating to the State Convention Registration section, please contact the Convention Registration Chairman, Richard Gallant, at ConventionRegistration@floridakofc.org 561-707-5973, or the State Warden, Ed Sleyzak, StateWarden@floridakofc.org, 813-416-4317.

Please read the enclosed State Warden's Letter for additional information about our 120th Annual Convention.

Finally, please note that, as we have done in the

past several years, the Caucuses to nominate and elect Delegates to the Supreme Convention will be done electronically before the State Convention, during the period May 1 – May 22, 2024. This year, the Supreme Convention will take place in Quebec City, Canada, which means US attendees will need passports. The Expiration Date on passports can be no less than six months from the last day of travel. So, if a Supreme Convention attendee will depart Canada on August 8, 2024 (the

last day of the convention), the Expiration Date on their passport can be no earlier than February 8, 2025. Any potential Delegate to the Supreme Convention should plan accordingly and get or update their passport if they need to do so waiting until after the Caucus elections will be too late.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to seeing this task completed.

Fraternally, Rick Hughes, State Deputy

This letter supplements the letter of instruction from the State Deputy on the 2024 State Convention.

Delegate Registration

In preparation for the 120th State Convention of the Florida State Council, to be held May 24-26, 2024, please read all the instructions in the letter from our Worthy State Deputy Rick Hughes before you attempt to register for the State Convention. In it, he explains the process for electing Council Delegates to the 120th State Convention, and your Council Financial Secretary’s electronic submission of the Election of Delegates Form with the State. *This form must be completed before Council Delegates or other Council Members can register for the Convention and purchase Convention event tickets.* No Delegate will be able to register as a Delegate until the Financial Secretary completes this task. Your Council’s Delegate registration is the basis for your Council’s participation in the State Convention. Please be sure your elected Delegates understand and follow all these instructions. The Convention Registration page on the State website repeats these instructions.

The Convention Badge and Credentials for the Council Delegates will be held by the State Council until the attending Council Delegates pick them up at the State Convention during the registration sign-in process – they will not be mailed. To obtain Convention Badge and Credentials, each Delegate and Attendee must present the Registration and

Credentials Committee a Government-issued photo ID and a valid 3rd Degree Travel Card that is signed.

Hotel – Meals – Banquet Reservations

It is the responsibility of the Council Financial Secretary – after he has completed the Election of Delegates Form – to inform the Council Delegates, or Alternate Delegates, that they are able to register for the State Convention. It is the responsibility of each Council Delegate, or Alternate Delegate, to register himself, as well as his spouse and/or guests, using the Convention Registration Form on the State Website. *Please note that Alternate Delegates should NOT register as a Delegate unless they have confirmed that the primary Delegate will not be attending the Convention.*

Council Delegates should log in to the Florida State Council Website at www.floridakofc.org and click on the Convention Registration button underneath Options on the dashboard to complete the State Convention registration process and purchase event tickets. *(Note: The Delegate/ Alternate Delegate must be a registered user of the State Website to access this information.)* Other information on the State Convention, including information on hotel reservations, Convention Committee assignments, dress codes, etc., can be found by clicking on the State Meeting tab near the top and then clicking 2024 State Convention.. *Council Members are encouraged to visit the State Convention Section of the State Website often for new and updated information about the event.* Please ensure that your Delegates receive this information and complete website registration and

hotel reservations promptly. NO ADDITIONAL MAILINGS WILL BE FORTHCOMING. ALL FURTHER MATERIALS WILL BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR FROM THE WEBSITE.

The State Convention registration site is expected to open on January 15, 2024. *All registrations and payments for the State Convention must be completed by Sunday, May 1, 2024.*

- **Hotel Reservations:** Information on making hotel reservations at the Hyatt Regency Orlando can be found on the State website. You must use the link provided, or call the number indicated and use the listed group code, in order to get Knights of Columbus rates. **THE DEADLINE FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS IS MAY 1, 2024.** Reserve your rooms early, as the Florida State Council does not guarantee room availability once the block of rooms has been filled.

- **Event and Meal Order Registration:** When registering for the State Convention, each attendee will be able register and pay for events, such as the State Banquet and Ladies Luncheon, for themselves and guests. The events that are presented to you will depend on your registration status—Delegate, District Deputy, Regional Administrator, State Officer, State Executive Board, Clergy, State Staff, General Agent, Field Agent, and/or Attendee. Delegates, District Deputies, and State Council staff will receive one pre-paid registration for the Saturday Banquet Ticket and one pre-paid Registration Packet. *The costs will for each of these will automatically be deducted from the per diem and mileage allowance (see below.)* The Saturday Banquet is considered an official function of the State Convention. Should a Delegate, District Deputy, or member of the State Staff decide not to attend the Banquet, the cost will still be deducted from his per diem and mileage allowance.

Additional tickets for Convention events (Saturday Banquet and/or Ladies Luncheon) are available for purchase for spouses and guests at the time of registration. Purchases are made with an online payment by PayPal or credit card at the time of registration. Any online payment for meals and registration for must be completed at time of

electronic registration. Check the State Convention Section of the State Website for acceptable forms of payment. **ABSOLUTELY NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE CONVENTION.**

We hope to have a special event for any children that will be accompanying members. More information will be distributed via email as it becomes available.

- **Saturday Banquet Seating:** After completing registration and payment for any balance due, registrants will be given the opportunity to choose a table for themselves and their guests for the Saturday Banquet.

- **Per Diem and Mileage:** A per diem of \$50.00 per day and MILEAGE of \$0.25 per mile for fifty (50) miles or more will be paid to each Delegate, District Deputy, and State Staff PROVIDING he answers each roll call and is not absent for more than two hours during any business session. A maximum of two days per diem will be paid, unless the member is traveling more than 250 miles one-way, in which case an extra day per diem will be authorized. Mileage is calculated between the member’s home Council and the Queen of the Universe Basilica in Orlando. As noted above, the costs of registration, Saturday Banquet, and Saturday Breakfast will be deducted from the final per diem and travel allowance paid out.

If you experience any difficulty in registration or processing payment, please contact Richard Gallant, State Webmaster, Registration at (561) 707-5973 or ConventionRegistraton@floridakofc.org.

If you have any questions regarding the process, please contact a Registration Committeeman in your area for assistance or you may contact me directly. Let’s make sure that each member and his family attending the Convention has a most enjoyable and memorable experience during the 120th State Convention. May God bless each of you and your family.

Fraternally, Ed Sleyzak, State Warden



**Knights of
Columbus®
Florida
State Council**



January 15, 2024

Re: 2024 Florida State Council Convention Advertising and Sponsorship Solicitations

Worthy State Officers, Directors, Chairmen, Regional Directors, District Deputies, Grand Knights, General Agents and Brother Knights,

As you may already know, the 120th Florida State Convention will take place May 24-26, 2024 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando.

The Florida State Council requests every Brother Knight be involved with the 2024 Knights of Columbus Florida State Council Convention Advertising and Sponsorship solicitation effort.

It is imperative that we act now and submit the appropriate forms for Convention Ad submissions. **Deadline is May 1st, 2024.**

All District Deputies are respectfully requested to place a \$500 full page ad in the Program Book. This is accomplished by soliciting each of your Councils and Assemblies for their proportional share. In addition, all Brother Knights, especially our State, Regional, and District Leadership, are requested to help find commercial and business advertising for the Program Book as well as key sponsorships for the State Convention.

DISTRICT AD PROCEDURE:

- DDs - Fill out the Program Ad order form and return to Weldon O. Watkins III with a check made payable to: **Florida State Council**
- Email a separate DD Word document using Arial 12 font with your District Council & Assembly information in the following format:
 - Council # and name
 - GK name
 - FS name
 - Chaplain name

Same information is needed for Assemblies and Columbiettes.

MAIL TO:

**Weldon O. Watkins III
C/O FSC Knights of Columbus
4783 NW 45th Ct
Ocala FL 34482**

Request that Regional Directors assist in stressing the urgency to get these forms in early and with payment.

ADVERTISING OBJECTIVE - offset convention costs and present a better convention experience offer to all attendees whether in-person or virtual.

BUSINESS ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIPS

All Brother Knights are encouraged to solicit and promote their businesses, commercial businesses, and related organizations for the purpose of partnering with the Florida Knights on the following,

- Program Book Advertisement
- Sponsorship of Key Convention Events
- Exhibit Tables for the Convention Trade Show
- Donation of Promotional Items.

Review the offerings and present them to everyone you know - Brother Knights, Brother Knight business owner, Commercial Business Owners with affinity for our principles, Non-Profit Corporations that do similar work and Service Providers in other fields of endeavor aligned with Knights of Columbus.

A sponsor vetting process will be conducted by the Marketing committee along with the State Advocate for each business entry.

All forms will be available on the website with open access.

Let's do it! – Our State Goal is \$50,000.

Vivat Jesús,

Weldon O. Watkins III

Advertising@floridakofc.org

352-229-4501



Father Downey Council 4934 of Sacred Heart Church in New Smyrna Beach continued its support of the Pregnancy Crisis Center in Daytona Beach with a check for \$3,500.

The donation was presented by Council Life Director Rich Ross, as part of the Knights' ASAP (Aid and Support After Pregnancy program), in which Supreme donates \$100 for every \$500, up to \$2,000.

Statement on the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children January 22, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Our fidelity to Christ calls us to uphold and protect the inviolable dignity and sanctity of all human life from the moment of conception until natural death. Great progress has been made in recent years to protect women and their preborn children in Florida. That progress, as noted below, is at great risk.

We are encouraged that our state's 15-week abortion limit remains in effect as the Florida Supreme Court considers a challenge to it. The legislature's passage of a bill to further limit abortion to six-weeks of gestation during the 2023 session and its approval by Governor DeSantis is a momentous achievement. This legislation also increases resources to pregnant women and young families through the Florida Pregnancy Care Network almost six-fold. If the 15-week law is upheld, the further limit to six weeks will go into effect thirty days later, ushering in a new era.

Much remains to be done to properly recognize the dignity of the child in the womb, but this marks tremendous progress in the legal protection of preborn children in Florida.

This progress, as well as gains made over the past several decades to protect women and their preborn children from the harms of abortion, is at significant risk. An extreme ballot initiative proposing to amend our state constitution to legalize full-term abortion is of grave concern. If ultimately passed, the amendment would legalize abortion up until birth, including when the baby is capable of feeling pain. While the proposed amendment permits parental notification, the amendment would eliminate the current law requiring parental consent for a minor daughter to receive an abortion.

As is required of the petition initiative process, the proposed ballot language is under review

by the Florida Supreme Court. In our briefs to the Court, we contend that the ballot title and summary are misleading, which should preclude its placement on the ballot. The title states the amendment "limits" government interference with abortion when the amendment actually prohibits all regulation before viability. Neither does the language provide fair notice of its impact on existing statutory protections for women. If this extreme amendment ultimately appears on the November 2024 ballot, we urge all Floridians to "vote no."

A healthy society can only continue to flourish if based on a consistent recognition of the rights of each individual, especially the weakest and most defenseless. With this in mind, we remain committed to pursuing full legal protection of preborn children and continue to support efforts to offer practical assistance and accompaniment to women and their families experiencing difficulties during pregnancy and beyond. We invite all people of good will to join us in these endeavors.

Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, Archdiocese of Miami

Most Rev. Gerald M. Barbarito, Diocese of Palm Beach

Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Diocese of Venice

Most Rev. John G. Noonan, Diocese of Orlando

Most Rev. Gregory L. Parkes, Diocese of St. Petersburg

Most Rev. William A. Wack, C.S.C, Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

Most Rev. Erik T. Pohlmeier, Diocese of St. Augustine

Most Rev. Enrique E. Delgado, Archdiocese of Miami

INVOCATION

Knights of Columbus Florida State Council Newsletter How To Write an Article

Newsworthy • Broad Appeal • Concise • Complete • Factual • Accurate
Answers the Questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why & How

INVOCATION reports on local council activities throughout the entire State of Florida

- Article size: **300 words** ideal (half page) to 500-600 words max (full page)
- Articles submitted as an attachment in Word format - not in the body of an email
 - PDF submissions are for ads or promotions - not articles
- Pictures need to be sent separately as an attachment and the original pictures **Please do not format them in any way, we will do it**-- not embedded in a Word document
- **Articles need to be brief, highly relevant and actionable**
- **At a minimum, Who, What, When and Where needs to be in the first paragraph,**
- Articles need to be brief, to-the-point and **of interest** to the entire State Council
 - What is the event/activity about?
 - Whom did it benefit?
 - What was the result?
 - Who are the key players/Knights?
- **Similar story** submissions will be consolidated/batched into one article by the Editors
- Authors must submit on time per the Editor production calendar- **Deadline 1st of each month**
 - Late submittals will be placed farther down the newsletter or not published.
- Proof your article carefully for spelling and grammar before sending (**use spellcheck**)
- Document filename should reflect the office/title, i.e. State Deputy article
- Every Region needs to participate – one page of the Invocation will be dedicated to each Region respectively
 - If a region does not submit content their page will be eliminated from that issue
- Cover story submissions need to be submitted ahead of the deadline due to special photo editing
 - Cover story photos – in portrait style at least 1mb in size - not formatted or resized
 - filename “Cover Story”

Send all information:

Region 1: Robert C. Guillery rag130@outlook.com

Region 2: invocation@floridakofc.org

Region 3: John O'Malley jomalley1@cfl.rr.com

Region 4: invocation@floridakofc.org

Region 5: invocation@floridakofc.org

Region 6: Armando Minutoli alminutoli146@gmail.com

For general information or questions email: invocation@floridakofc.org



Are You A Member?

The Blessed Michael J. McGivney Guild serves as a source for information about the life, works and spirituality of Father McGivney.

The Guild distributes informational materials about him, receives reports of favors granted through his intercession and oversees the distribution of relics.

Guild members receive regular updates on the progress of Blessed Michael J. McGivney's



cause for canonization and are invited to participate in promoting devotion to this Servant of God. Members of the Knights of Columbus are not automatically Guild members and must elect to join the Guild.

The Blessed Michael J. McGivney Guild Newsletter is published bimonthly except July - August, and is sent free to Guild members.

To join the Guild, register online at: <http://www.fathermcgivney.org/> †

Did you know that the State of Florida Council has a YouTube Channel? Well, we do! This is a place where we can put in videos of the all the great things that we do as Knights in the State of Florida.

During the State Convention we took video interviews of some of the Dignitaries that honored us with their presence. You can

see the videos by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Please be sure to subscribe to the channel so you will be notified when new videos are added. If you have any videos that you would like to add that shows your Council doing good works please email Jim Clark, Broadcast Media Relations and Production Director at jclark1@gmail.com.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FLORIDA STATE COUNCIL
MISSION STATEMENT

Evangelize and proclaim our faith, protect families, and perform works of charity.

Through our witness and deeds attract Catholic men to our Order.

Build the Domestic Church through service, support our parishes, clergy, and communities.

Incorporate principled fiscal responsibility for charitable giving.

The Florida State Logo



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Region 4 (Open)

Region 5 (Open)

Region 6 Armando Minutoli *alminutoli46@gmail.com*

Region 7 (Open)

Region 8 (Open)

Florida State Council Social Media

Your State Council is now on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube. We need all Brother Knights to participate and Let Your Light Shine.

- Go to Facebook and "LIKE" the page
- Go to Twitter and Instagram and "follow"
- #LetYourLightShine @KofcFlorida



Knightline

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.
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Check out the current issue of **Knightline**, a monthly resource for local KofC leaders. It is designed to help council officers plan events and activities, meet quarterly goals for the fraternal year and learn about Orderwide news. [CLICK HERE](#) to download the issue.

COLUMBIA

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the online version of **COLUMBIA** Magazine, a publication for the Knights of Columbus.



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