

## **Knights of Columbus**

A Knights of Columbus Council exists for the benefit and welfare of the needy individuals, their families, and organizations in the area where it is located, and beyond. This international, fraternal institution operates and organizes all its activities through five broad, distinct categories: Church, Council, Community, Family, and Youth..

Several officers, directors, and chairmen run local K of C Councils. All officers are elected annually by the council, membership, except Chaplain, Financial Secretary, and Lecturer, who are appointed by either the Grand Knight of a local council or Supreme Knight at the headquarters of the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, Connecticut. Grand Knight or his designee always selects the directors and chairmen associated with the individual programs or projects of the council.

The grand knight is primarily responsible for providing overall leadership for the successful conduct of his council, with active participation and assistance from the officers and members. It is the grand knight's obligation to find ways and means to create interest and avenues, inspire mutual cooperation and respect, as well as provide guidelines to initiate voluntary services, among and for the council officers and members, in the true spirit of brotherhood, and devotion to God, Church, and Country.

### **Knights of Columbus**

*In Solidarity With Our Bishops and Priests*

**Serving the Catholic Church, Families, Community, and Youth for Generations**

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In 1882, a young parish priest named Father Michael J. McGivney gathered a small group of Catholic laymen together in the basement of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Connecticut. That group formed a fraternal benefit society to provide financial assistance through an insurance program for the widows of its members while offering fellowship among Catholic men. The group eventually became known as the Knights of Columbus.

From such a humble beginning, the Knights of Columbus has grown into a fraternal order of nearly 1.7 million members located in about 13,000 Councils throughout the world. The driving forces behind such an enormous growth are embedded in four fundamental principles of human life and existence: Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism.

The Order is committed to Charity, easing the plight of those less fortunate. It uses the strength of Unity to speak our fearlessly in support of the religiously grounded moral values and ethics in a culture that has nearly forsaken them. As an Order, the members of the Knights of Columbus have been able to band together as brothers, through the ideals of Fraternity, to help one another in times of distress, sickness, and death. As a visible arm of the Order, the Knights in their full regalia serve to witness the values of devotion to God and loyalty to country, the bedrock of Patriotism.

**The Knights of Columbus is the world's largest, and probably the oldest lay Catholic family, fraternal, service organization. Membership to the Order is open to all eligible Catholic men who are at least 18 years of age, and who govern themselves by the precepts and tenets of the Holy Catholic Church.**

The Knights, who come from every walk of life, enjoy sharing their time, talent, and treasure in a vigorous program of service. The K of C Councils provide a large variety of opportunities for members and their families to get involved in activities that are enjoyable and rewarding. The council projects benefit the Church, priests, seminarians and other members of the religious, as well as the community at large. The circle of such beneficiaries includes, among others, those who are homebound, homeless, sick, distressed, physically disabled, mentally challenged, as well as those who are in the forefront of fight against poverty, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, pornography, and other social ills and injustice.

The members, and their wives and children also enjoy the fruits of labor put out by the local councils through participation in group celebration of Holy Masses, retreats, pilgrimages, clergy appreciation nights, living rosaries, dinners, dances, parties, sports activities, blood donation, highway cleaning, outings, and trips, to name just a few. The Knights of Columbus activities provide something for everyone. The K of C programs are generally organized to bring out the best of mutual respect, fraternalism, fun, and fellowship among the council members and citizens of the community.

From its founding in 1882, the Knights and their families have remained truly dedicated to the doctrines of Columbianism. Their total devotion to God, high esteem for the bishops and priests, uncompromising support toward the propagation and preservation of Catholic faith, and continuance of good, moral and hard work toward the welfare of the community and its citizens led to the paramount success and global reputation that the Order has earned and enjoys today.

As the Order grew in size over the years, so did its magnitude of care, concern, compassion, and benevolence for the society at large. The K of C continues to surpass its previous records of charitable financial contributions and volunteer services. In the last decade, the Knights had donated nearly \$1 billion to various charities and more than 400 million hours of volunteer services.

Just to cite a few other acts of benevolence, the Knights of Columbus, during the last 10-year period, had contributed \$330 million toward the Church-related projects alone, and more than \$49 million separately toward the community programs. According to an independent evaluation group, the total value of the Order's volunteer hours to the society exceeded \$1 billion. Additionally, the 2002 fraternal survey statistics showed that a total of 389,379 knights donated blood, while the members of the Order made 5.8 million visits to the sick and bereaved.

The members of K of C Councils and their families derive a great sense of joy, pride, and satisfaction from being able to develop lasting friendships with each other, while helping the less fortunate in the community they live in and beyond. No matter what they do, how they conduct their programs, or wherever the events may take place, the central core of the Knights' actions

and activities provide a rich mix of purpose, discipline, boldness, courage, camaraderie, fortitude, and an overall balance between timeliness and accomplishment. The Knights of Columbus are ever mindful to celebrate the “Culture of Life”.

The Knights of Columbus, as an organization, offers a number of fraternal benefits to eligible members and their families, which include educational scholarships, student loans, graduate fellowships, disaster aids, death benefits, insurance protection, investment opportunities, and plenty more.

As indicated elsewhere, the Order’s unique strength, steadfast growth, and enviable reputation continue to result from an uncompromising conformity to its four value-added principles of Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism, navigated by the dictums of Catholic faith and education, love of God, and respect for priests and the religious. Over the years, the Knights of Columbus have strived and succeeded in attaining its **ten primary operational goals and objectives, as enumerated below:**

1. Supporting the Catholic Church and its religious faith, as well as its shepherds and leaders.
2. Battling against the heinous crimes of abortion and euthanasia.
3. Promoting and perpetuating the ideals and values of Catholic education.
4. Building strong fraternal bonds through social, religious, family, and athletic activities.
5. Providing comfort and assistance to the sick, distressed, homeless, disabled, elderly, and the needy.
6. Discovering and fulfilling the community needs and wants through social, moral, legal, and ethical programs.
7. Ensuring the financial security of its members and their families through the Order’s fraternal insurance and investment programs.
8. Preserving and promoting the legacy and heritage of our country and defending the ideals of patriotism.
9. Remaining ever thankful and commemorating the rock-solid sacrifices and contributions made by the law-enforcement, fire, military, and emergency service personnel.
10. Building America vis-à-vis world a better living place for the human race, one careful and bold step at a time.

**BE AN EVERYDAY HERO...MAKE YOUR FAMILY A PART OF OURS!  
JOIN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS...THE RIGHT ARM OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH!**