

## What You Don't Know about the Knights of Columbus

### ***Father Michael J. McGivney and the Founding of the Knights of Columbus***

- In 1882, Catholic immigrants were facing hostility and were thrown into dangerous work conditions which could cause early deaths. 29-year-old Father Michael McGivney gathered the men of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., to found a lay organization on the principles of charity, unity, and fraternity. The goal was to unite men of Catholic faith and provide for the families of deceased members.
- Father McGivney is a candidate for sainthood. His [cause](#) for canonization is open, and he was given the title "Venerable Servant of God" by the Holy See in 2008.

### ***The Knights today***

- With nearly 2 million members and over 15,000 councils worldwide, the Order is still true to its founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity.
- Knights are active in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Poland, Panama, Guatemala, Lithuania, Bahamas, Saint Lucia, South Korea, Ukraine and more.
- There are 374 K of C councils on college campuses around the world.

### ***Also an Insurance Company***

- The insurance system established by Father McGivney has evolved into a top-rated Fortune 1000 [insurance](#) program, with a financial strength rating of A+ (Superior) from AM Best, and over \$100 billion of life insurance in force.

### ***Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors offers a suite of faith-based investment solutions for Catholic investors.***

- K of C's investment team managed approximately \$24 billion in assets related to these businesses as of the most recent quarter end. These strategies are managed in accordance with Catholic [moral principles](#).

### ***Charity by the numbers***

- 2017 was a [record-setting](#) year for Knights of Columbus charitable work with an unprecedented \$185.6 million in donations and 75.6 million hours of service provided worldwide.
- K of C donated [\\$1.62 billion](#) to charitable causes over the past decade (as of December 2017).

### ***Support for genocide victims***

- The Order produced a [280-page report](#) detailing the genocide against Christians by ISIS, which was decisive in getting the genocide recognized by the U.S. State Department.
- The Knights are saving a Christian town in Iraq that was desecrated by ISIS and raising \$2 million to save Karamles, a town recently liberated from ISIS.
- In recent years, the Order has been assisting in the construction of McGivney House, a 140 unit apartment building that will provide housing for both Syrian and Chaldean families.

## ***Pro-Life***

- K of C has been instrumental to the annual event since the very [first](#) one in 1974.
- Since 2009, the Knights have funded 950+ [ultrasound](#) machines at pregnancy care centers in all 50 states. The K of C's goal is to reach 1,000 machines by 2019. If each machine saves the lives of just four unborn children each week, the Knights will have saved more than 1 million lives.

## ***Special Olympics***

- The Knights have been a major [supporter](#) of the Special Olympics since the very first games, and have raised and donated more than \$600 million and 4 million volunteer hours to the Special Olympics.

## ***Noteworthy Knights***

- Several Knights have already been declared saints. St. Luis Batis, St. Rodrigo Aguilar, St. Miguel de la Mora, St. Pedro de Jesús Maldonado, St. José María Robles and St. Mateo Correa were martyred during the persecution of Catholics in Mexico in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Babe Ruth, Vince Lombardi and [President John F. Kennedy](#) were all members of the Knights.

## ***At the peak of the Ku Klux Klan's power, the K of C stood as its most [vigorous opponent](#).***

- In one incident in 1924, hooded Klansmen abducted, severely beat and mutilated Father John Conoley in Gainesville, Fla. Knights armed with shotguns stood in the windows of the rectory, protecting another priest and the church itself from the Klan's threats to burn it.

## ***Patriotism***

- Patriotism is the fourth pillar of the K of C, following the founding principles of charity, unity, and fraternity.
- The Knights were instrumental in [lobbying](#) for the words "under God" to be added to the Pledge.
- This year, the Knights sent more than 200 pilgrims to the Marian shrine in Lourdes, France for a time of rest, prayer and healing as part of the annual [Warriors to Lourdes](#) pilgrimage.
- Both the first American and the last American to fall in [World War I](#) were Knights of Columbus.

## ***Evangelizing a new generation***

- A major supporter of [vocations](#), K of C councils "adopt" one or more seminarians and provide them with financial assistance and prayer through the RSVP program.
- A major initiative of the K of C, the [Saint John Paul II National Shrine](#) in Washington D.C. has a first-class relic of JPII's blood, and it is a great place to venerate the saint and remember his legacy.

## ***With the new Online Membership program, joining the Knights is easier than ever.***

- Practicing Catholic men 18 years of age and older can join at [KofC.org/JoinUs](#)