



AN INSPIRING WEEK WITH SOME INSPIRING MEN

I have recently returned from a week in Quebec City, Canada, which was this year's location for the Supreme Convention of the Knights of Columbus, the 142nd Supreme Convention since Blessed Father Michael McGivney founded the Knights in 1882. This was my seventh convention and, as with the others, I left the week inspired by what I had seen and heard and more certain than ever that the Knights have a critical role to play in the revival of faith and family life in our Church and our world.

I would like to share some of the highlights of what the Knights have done this past year. The Knights of Columbus can rightly be called "Knights of Charity." Financially, the Knights gave over \$190 million to charitable causes over the past year. Through their Coats for Kids program, they have now donated more than *one million* brand-new winter coats to needy children. Their Global Wheelchair Mission gave the gift of mobility to over 11,000 people in need this past year. As always, the Knights were leaders in the fight to promote and protect the dignity of all human life. In the last two years alone, the Knights have provided over \$11 million to pregnancy centers and maternity homes through their Aid and Support After Pregnancy (ASAP) initiative. Their Ultrasound Initiative, begun in 2009, has now provided over 1,800 ultrasound machines to pregnancy centers across the nation. Experience has shown that showing an ultrasound image of the baby is one of the most effective ways to convince a mother in a crisis pregnancy to choose life.

Of course, the dignity of all human life extends beyond the womb, and one of the ways the Knights witness to this is their incredible support of the Special Olympics, an organization the Knights of Columbus have been supporting since its foundation over 50 years ago. This past year, the Knights not only gave roughly \$4 million in financial support but also helped to organize more than 4,000 Special Olympics events nationwide. Speaking of human dignity, how can we not speak about the tragedy happening in Ukraine? Since the start of the war, Knights of Columbus aid convoys have delivered over 8.5 million pounds of aid to Ukraine. Their Mercy Centers at the border with Poland have welcomed and aided over 1.6 million refugees—mostly women and children. And the Knights' Ukraine Relief Fund has given over \$17 million in financial aid to the devastated population of that country. The Knights have done so much to aid the Ukrainians that the Russian authorities have officially banned the Knights of Columbus from Russian-controlled territory. As the Supreme Knight, Patrick Kelly, said at the convention: their ban is our badge of honor!

At the convention, I had dinner one evening with Father Oleksandr Bohomaz. He is a young Ukrainian priest who was ministering in Melitopol early in the war when it was overrun by the Russian army. Rather than flee, he remained behind to minister to the remaining Catholics, sneaking into homes to administer the sacraments. He was

caught by Russian intelligence, jailed, interrogated, tortured, and threatened with death. Ultimately they deported him back to Ukrainian-held lands. Rather than flee to a safer part of Ukraine, he found a village as near as he could to the front lines and has continued to minister there to this day. At the convention, he was filled with joy every time I saw him. I truly think he might be a modern-day saint. He is certainly a modern-day hero.



As I conclude this, I want to say that I am proud to be a Knight of Columbus myself and am so very thankful for all the Knights do worldwide and right here in our own parish. The council here is one of the true backbones of our parish life. Once again, I would like to extend a personal invitation to every man in the parish who is not yet a Knight to consider joining this wonderful organization. You can get in touch with the council at our parish by emailing grandknight@elderkofo.org, or simply speak to me and I will connect you with one of our Knights for more information.

Finally, I have VERY EXCITING NEWS to share with the parish. At 7:30 p.m. on the evening of September 15, a very special family will be speaking at our parish. Daniel and Michelle Schachle's little boy, Michael, was miraculously healed in utero. That miracle was the official Vatican-approved miracle that led to Father McGivney's beatification in 2020. And they (along with "Miracle Mikey," as he is called) will be here at St. Gertrude that evening to tell the story of that miracle. It will be an evening not to miss, so mark your calendars now. More information will be coming in the weeks ahead. God bless,

Rev. John Paul Walker, O.P.

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FROM THE DIARY OF ST. MARIA FAUSTINA KOWALSKA



"O Mary, Virgin Mother and Heaven's Gate, through You salvation came to us. Every grace to us streams forth through Your hands, and faithful imitation of You only will sanctify me. O Mother, Virgin – most beautiful Lily. Your Heart was for Jesus the first tabernacle on earth, and that, because Your humility was the deepest, wherefore You were raised above Angel choirs and Saints. O Mary, my sweet Mother, to You I turn over my soul, my body and my poor heart. Be the safeguard of my life, especially at death's hour, in the final fight." (*Diary, #161*)