

The Magnolia Knight

A Word from the State Deputy

Spring Forward



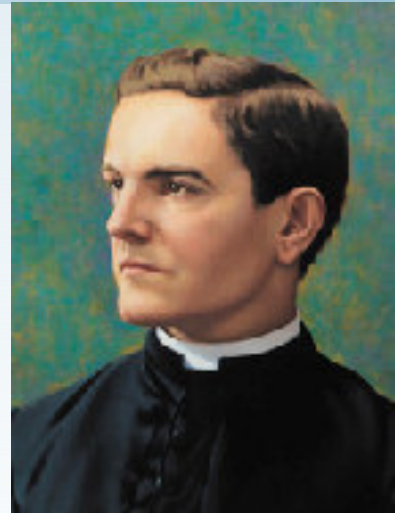
Spring is a time of renewal. We should take our cue from Mother Nature and renew ourselves and our councils. As Easter draws upon us, we have encountered many opportunities to grow spiritually and as Knights of Columbus, we should be contributing to those opportunities. Many councils are most active during Lent; leading the rosary, participating in the stations of the cross, preparing Lenten meals and performing charitable acts. All of this activity leads to a great opportunity to grow your council. When the men of your parish witness the activities of your council, they will want to be a part of it. Give them the opportunity to join you by holding a first de-

gree exemplification. Invite eligible men of your parish to join your council. Welcome new members openly and get them involved by insuring they are invited to the council activities. It is every members responsibility to offer the opportunity to join the Knights of Columbus to those eligible men of their parish.

Our State Convention will be held in Jackson this year. I look forward to seeing members from all over the state in attendance. If you are a delegate of your council, remember to bring your council and assembly banners to the convention. We have initiated a new tradition of a Banner Procession immediately preceding the Friday night social. We hope that councils and assemblies will show their pride by bringing their banner (and banner stand) to the convention. Also, remember that the Friday night social is in honor of all chaplains. Please invite your council chaplain to attend the Friday night social. We will have special recognition for all priests in attendance.

Lastly, I encourage all council leaders to strive to make your council a star council. You have until June 30 to complete the requirements to become a star council. Last year, there were 13 star councils in the state. This year, I think we can have 20 star councils. Star council requirements include membership, programs, insurance and paperwork. Call on your district deputy to see where your council stands. Let me or one of the other state officers know if your council

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Send Council, Assembly and Circle news to John Lacourrege at ijklacourrege@bellsouth.net

Ten Ways to Deepen Our Relationship with God



*Archbishop of
Philadelphia
Charles J.
Chaput, O.F.M.
CAP.*

Over the years I've heard from many good people who want a closer relationship with God. But they're stymied by what they perceive as God's silence. What they often mean, without knowing it, is that they'd like God to do something dramatic in their lives; something with a hint of Mt. Sinai that proves his credentials.

But God typically doesn't work that way. He's not in the theater business. God wants to be loved and even in a sense "courted" — which means that we can't be passive partners in the relationship. We need to pursue God as we would the persons we love.

So here are a few steps — in no particular order — that can help us draw closer to God.

First, start by listening to him. Faith isn't a 12-step action program. Nor is it an algebra problem that needs to be "solved." It's a love affair. As with a spouse, the most important thing we can do is to be present and listen. This requires the investment of time and focus. If a spirit of impatience or pretending to listen doesn't work with your spouse, why would it work with God?

Second, cultivate silence. We can't listen when our world is filled with noise and toys. C.S. Lewis often said that noise is the music of hell. Our toys — those things we choose to distract us — keep us diverted from focusing on the main questions of life: Why are we here? What does my life mean? Is there a God, and if so, who is he, and what does he ask of me?

Third, seek humility. Humility is to the spirit what material poverty is to the senses: the great purifier. Humility is the beginning of sanity. We can't really see — much less love — anyone or anything else when the self is in the way. When we finally, really believe in our own sinfulness and unimportance, many other things become possible: repentance; mercy, patience, forgiveness of other. These virtues are the foundation stones of that other great Christian virtue: justice. No justice is ever possible in a spider's web of mutual anger, recrimination and hurt pride.

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Disaster Response and Charitable Outreach



*Gerald Schmuck, PSD
State Disaster
Response Director*

Disasters can happen at any time and in any place and our Knights of Columbus have always been ready to help as the need arises. Recently, other organizations and agencies throughout the state have recognized what we do and asked if we could assist them with their recovery efforts. Always willing to help when needed, I, as the State Deputy at the time, set up the state disaster response program. When I stepped down and turned over the SD position to David Scott, he asked me to continue with the program as director. Since the program's start approximately 18 months ago, we have made a lot of progress. We joined the Mississippi Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (MSVOAD); a group of non-profit organizations such as Red Cross, Salvation Army, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Catholic Charities as well as others to assist

with disaster recovery efforts throughout the state. Because we have more manpower resources than money and materials, we have partnered with Catholic Charities of the Jackson and Biloxi Dioceses to provide assistance when needed. What kind of assistance? We need men with all kinds of expertise. For example, we need people with construction experience to assist with damage assessment. We also need people willing to work on roofs covering the damage with tarps (blue roof program), people trained to clear out flooded homes (muck out program), people to cut and clear debris from around damaged houses, people with warehouse experience to receive and distribute supplies at various points of distribution, cooks and bottle washers. Basically we need anyone who is willing to help.

In addition to partnering with Catholic Charities, we are looking at helping with other areas as well. We were recently contacted by the Mississippi Emergency Management Administration (MEMA) asking if we were interested in assisting them and the Volunteer Mississippi Agency to set up and manage Volunteer Response Centers throughout the state. Your State Secretary, Jim McGraw and I attended a meeting with them on April 2nd to discuss the possibility of establishing this important new program. If we accept this partnership, we will be tasked with setting up and managing Volunteer Response Centers anywhere in

"We need all councils to start organizing by creating a list of men (and wives) ... willing to help."

the state when MEMA requests help. To make this program a success, we need people with managerial skills along with others possessing clerical and phone skills and people who can interview and assign volunteers to different jobs. This is an excellent opportunity for those of you who want to help but cannot work in the field.

How can we do all these things? To begin with, we need all councils to start organizing by creating a list of men (and wives) who are willing to help. The list should include previous experience, areas of interest, any physical disabilities etc. As you develop your lists, don't forget to send copies to me at jschmuck@kableone.net if your council is in the Biloxi Diocese or to Tony Kumor at kofcpearl8038@yahoo.com if your council is in the Jackson Diocese. I have heard that the Meridian (802), Southaven (7120) and Gulfport (1583) councils have already started organizing. Congratulations to all of you and thank you for supporting this very important program. To the rest of you, let's pull together and show everyone in Mississippi and the surrounding area what Mississippi Knights are capable of accomplishing.

Madison Council Tees Off to Raise Funds for Seminarian Education



Tournament organizer Ed Marsalis (left) and Council 9543 GK Bill Amadio (right) present Bishop Joseph Kopacz (center) with a check for \$15,000 toward the education of future priests, representing some of the funds raised through the annual Floyd Q. Doolittle Memorial Golf Classic on Saturday, March 15th at Whisper Lake Golf Club in Madison.

On Saturday, March 15th, Knights of Columbus Council 9543 of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Madison sponsored the 2014 Floyd Q. Doolittle Memorial Golf Classic which was held at Whisper Lake Golf Club in Madison to benefit seminarian education in the Diocese of Jackson.

Some 70 plus golfers took part in the Four-Person Scramble as well as the Putting Contest preceding the tournament.

Highlights of the day included the introduction of newly ordained Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz for the Diocese of Jackson who also participated in the tournament and spoke on the importance of offering financial assistance to educate our future priests. At this time, Grand Knight Bill Amadio presented the Bishop with a check for \$15,000 with a promise of more funds to come. Additionally, golfers and volunteers were treated to lunch donated by Arby's and a family social dinner featuring homemade jambalaya, salad and desserts, plus presentation of prizes.

The council declared this to have been the most successful tournament ever!

Tom Sagar
Madison Council 9543



Ten Ways to Deepen Our Relationship with God *(continued from page 2)*

Fourth, cultivate honesty. Complete honesty is only possible for a humble person. The reason is simple. The most painful but important honesty is telling the truth to ourselves about our own motives and our own actions. The reason honesty is such a powerful magnet is because it's so rare.

Modern life is too often built on the marketing of half-truths and lies about who we are and what we deserve. Many of the lies are well-intentioned and not even very harmful — but they're still lies. Scripture praises the honest woman and man because they're like clean air in a room full of smoke. Honesty allows the mind to breathe and think clearly.

Fifth, seek to be holy. Holy does not mean nice or even good, although truly holy people are always good and often — though not always — nice. Holiness means "other than." It's what Scripture means when it tells us to be "in the world, but not of the world." And this doesn't just miraculously happen. We need to choose and seek holiness.

God's ways are not our ways. Holiness is the habit of seeking to conform all of our thoughts and actions to God's ways. There's no cookie-cutter model of holiness, just as piety can't be reduced to one particular kind of prayer or posture. What's important is to love the world because God loves it and sent his Son to redeem it, but not to be captured by its habits and values, which are not godly.

Sixth, pray. Prayer is more than just that portion of the day when we advise God about what we need and what he should do. Real prayer is much closer to listening, and it's intimately tied to obedience. God certainly wants to hear what we need and love and fear, because these things are part of our daily lives, and he loves us. But if we're doing the talking, we can't listen. Note too, that we can't really pray without humility. Why? Because prayer requires us to lift up who we are and everything we experience and possess to God. Pride is too heavy to lift.

Seventh, read. Scripture is the living Word of God. When we read God's Word, we encounter God himself. But there's more: J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Georges Bernanos and so many others — these were deeply intelligent and powerful writers whose work nourishes the Christian mind and soul, while also inspiring the imagination. Reading also serves another, simpler purpose: It shuts

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out the noise that distracts us from fertile reflection. We

can't read The Screwtape Letters and take network television seriously at the same time. And that's a very good thing.

By the way, if you do nothing else in 2014, read Tolkien's wonderful short story, Leaf by Niggle. It will take you less than an hour, but it will stay with you for a lifetime. And then read C.S. Lewis' great religious science-fiction trilogy — Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra and That Hideous Strength. You'll never look at our world in quite the same way again.

Eighth, believe and act. Nobody "earns" faith. It's a free gift from God. But we do need to be willing and ready to receive it. We can discipline ourselves to be prepared. If we sincerely seek truth; if we desire things greater than this life has to offer; and if we leave our hearts open to the possibility of God — then one day we will believe, just as when we choose to love someone more deeply, and turn our hearts sincerely to the task, then sooner or later we usually will.

Feelings are fickle. They're often misleading. They're not the substance of our faith. We need to be grateful for our emotions as God's gifts, but we also need to judge them in the light of common sense. Falling in love is only the first taste of love. Real love is both more beautiful and more demanding than the early days of a romance.

In like manner, a dramatic "road to Damascus" style conversion doesn't happen to most people, and not even St. Paul stayed on the road very long. Why? Because in revealing himself to Paul, Jesus immediately gave him something to do. We know and more deeply love Jesus Christ by doing what he tells us to do.

In the real world, feelings that endure follow actions that have substance. The more sincere we are in our discipleship, the closer we will come to Jesus Christ. This is why the Emmaus disciples only recognized Jesus in "the breaking of the bread." Only in acting in and on our faith, does our faith become fully real.

Ninth, nobody makes it to heaven alone. We all need friendship and community. A friend of mine who's been married more than 40 years likes to say that the heart of a good marriage is friendship. Every successful marriage is finally about a deep and particular kind of friendship that involves honesty, intimacy, fidelity, mutual sacrifice, hope and shared beliefs.

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needs help in achieving any of the requirements. Together, we can make your council a star council.

Have you thanked a priest today?

David Scott
State Deputy

Aspiring Hoops Stars Compete in Kiln Council Contest



Kiln Council 7078 GK Gary Cuevas is pictured with (left to right)

Haden Cuevas – 11 yr. old boys winner

Elijah Law – 13 yr. old boys winner

Maguire Warton – 10 yr. old girls winner

Haleigh Rae Lafontaine – 13 yr. old girls winner

Madelyn Ladner – 10 yr. old girls winner

Madison Alligood – 12 yr. old girls winner

Kiln Council 7078 held its Knights of Columbus Basketball Free Throw contest for 10 to 14-year-olds on Sunday, March 16th, in the fabulous new gymnasium at Hancock North Central Elementary School.

Twelve participants successfully completed, and each one took home a certificate. Each one who made the most baskets in his/her respective age group was awarded beautiful trophy. The best free throws made were by two young people with gifted abilities. Of the 15 free throw tries, they made 11 and 13 baskets respectively. Needless to say, the families were more enthusiastic than the focused competitors. All are looking forward to the next year's completion which promises to be bigger and better.

Bishop Fahey Council 1908 Raises Funds for Sacred Heart Church

Fr. Ken Ramon-Landry of Sacred Heart Church in Hattiesburg is shown receiving a check for \$6500 from Grand Knight Bill Jarrett of Bishop Fahey Council 1908. The money represents proceeds from the Council's fund raising project that will be used to address needs of Sacred Heart School.



Fourth Degree Color Corps Leads Jackson St. Paddy's Day Parade



A Color Corps comprised of Sir Knights from the Central Mississippi assemblies leads the annual St. Paddy's Day parade through downtown Jackson on Saturday, March 15th.

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Every successful marriage is also a form of community. Even Jesus needed these two things: friendship and community. The Apostles were not simply Christ's followers; they were also his brothers and friends, people who knew and supported him in an intimate way. All of us as Christians need the same two things. It doesn't matter whether we're a religious, layperson, deacon or priest, single or married. Friends are vital. Community is vital. Our friends both express and shape who we are. Good friends sustain us. Bad friends undermine us. And that's why they're so decisive to the success or failure of a Christian life.

God wants to be loved and even in a sense "courted" — which means that we can't be passive partners in the relationship. We need to pursue God as we would the persons we love.

Tenth and finally, nothing is more powerful than the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist in leading us to the God we seek. God makes himself available to us every week in the confessional, and every day in the sacrifice of the Mass. It makes little sense to talk about the "silence of God" when our churches are made silent by our own absence and indifference. We're the ones with the cold hearts — not God.

He's never outdone in his generosity. He waits for us in the quiet of the tabernacle. And he loves us and wants to be loved wholeheartedly in return. If we're willing to give that love, these steps will lead us to him.

Supreme Council Families of the Month



The following are the Mississippi winners of the Supreme Council's Family of the Month contest for the month of February 2014. They are obtained through a random drawing held at the Supreme Council office from among the many nominees submitted by local councils.

The families of:

Andy Spinnato
Council 8054—McComb

Christopher & Molly Cutcliffe
Council 10901—Oxford

Councils are encouraged to submit their Family of the Month reports in a timely fashion in order for their submissions to be eligible.