



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 5, 2025

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## **Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight's Awards Session Held on Eve of 143rd Supreme Convention**

*Awards Session recognizes outstanding Knights and councils and includes  
performance by Catholic band The Vigil Project*

**Washington, D.C.** — The Knights of Columbus welcomed more than 1,900 Knights and their families, members of the Catholic hierarchy and special guests from 10 countries to its 143<sup>rd</sup> Supreme Convention in Washington, D.C. at the Supreme Knight's Award Session. The annual awards session recognizes individual Knights, councils, assemblies and jurisdictions throughout the world who have faithfully carried out the mission of the Order's Founder, Blessed Michael McGivney. These honorees exemplify how Knights live their faith in service to their family, parish, community and country through charitable outreach, fraternal leadership, membership growth and retention, and insurance sales and service.

Guests at the Supreme Knight's Awards Session also enjoyed a performance by The Vigil Project, a nonprofit apostolate founded in 2016 by a community of music artists with a common vision to restore excellence in Catholic music and to invite Catholics into a deep encounter with God through music. With a focus on music for devotional prayer and serving at the parish level, The Vigil Project has released ten studio albums to-date, toured to hundreds of parishes across the US and Europe, and will soon be releasing a first-of-its-kind documentary film series called Meaning of Music.

In addition, Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly presented the Annual International Program Awards. The Annual International Program Awards competition recognizes councils that conduct an outstanding program in each of the Faith in Action program categories: faith, family, community and life. The first-place winners and a brief description of their activity can be found below:

### **Faith Programs**

**Coral Springs Council 8838**  
**Coral Springs, Florida**  
***Youth Eucharistic Adoration***

Coral Springs Council 8838 has organized 17 consecutive monthly holy hours geared toward the

youth in one of the five parishes in its area. An average of 700 people, including 250 youth, gather in the church for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In addition to adoration, the holy hours include a procession by the Knights of Columbus Color Guard, altar servers and clergy, as well as a rosary, confessions and worship music. The council also created a youth choir consisting of 30 children, led by a Knight as music director, for the holy hours. After worship concludes, the council provides pizza, drinks and ice cream as well as a space for fellowship. Sixteen men were inspired to join the Order thanks to these liturgies. This program has strengthened the faith of young people by creating opportunities for authentic connections with a loving God.

### **Family Programs**

#### **Andrey Sheptytsky Council 15804** **Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine** ***Knights of Columbus Cup***

Andrey Sheptytsky Council 15804 hosted a “Knights of Columbus Cup” sports competition at a major athletic complex for more than 50 orphans and internally displaced children. This is the 4th consecutive year the council has organized the competition. Council members consulted with staff of the sports complex, local teachers and a pediatrician to organize the event. Before the games, participants received medical examinations to ensure their health. The council chaplain began the event with prayer, followed by songs from the local seminarians and the chaplain’s blessing of all the participants. Knights set up the equipment for the competition, prepared the children for each event, timed the activities, and ensured each child felt supported throughout the games. The Knights also provided awards to participants. After the competition, the council hosted lunch for the children at the seminary. Due to the overwhelming success of the competition and requests from participants, the council is planning on hosting the Cup again this fraternal year. Twenty men also joined the Order as a result of these events. This council’s work exemplifies our Founder’s vision and the Order’s legacy of supporting orphans and welcoming the most vulnerable into the Knights of Columbus family.

### **Community Programs**

#### **St. Joseph Council 11370** **Maumee, Ohio** ***Off the Streets Toledo***

St. Joseph Council 11370 founded Off the Streets Toledo in 2021 to help both individuals and families move from homelessness to stable housing. Since its launch, more than 1,000 men, women and children have moved into safe, dignified homes thanks to the council’s efforts. Council members meet with those in need, provide security deposits, manage warehouse inventory, deliver furniture, appliances, and other material needs, pray with recipients and offer them a Bible and crucifix as a sign of faith and encouragement - more than 175 crucifixes hang on the walls of participating families thanks to this effort. In addition, the council hosts fundraising activities to provide ongoing support to the initiative. In 2024, the council contributed \$10,000 toward the purchase of a new delivery truck, allocated \$5,000 for

operational expenses and donated \$1,000 for 20 microwaves for families. Council 11370's efforts through Off the Streets Toledo restore the hope and dignity of those who have endured hardship and bring them closer to Christ.

### **Cure Roland Ouellet Council 11078**

**Val d'Or, Quebec**

***Operation of a Thrift Store for Newcomers and the Needy***

Val d'Or, like many municipalities in Québec, has seen an increase in the arrival of immigrants to their community, and along with it, an increase in the number of individuals and families in need. Council 11078 met this need by establishing a thrift store for the distribution of clothing, shoes and other necessities. The council partnered with a local business for free space for the store. Thanks to the council's outreach to a local chain discount store, they also received racks, boxes, hangers and units to display and store inventory. The council offers all items free of charge, and in 2024, met with 100 families, (many of whom experienced their first cold winter) and distributed approximately 4,000 items of clothing. Through this program, the council helps to sustain its community and welcomes and advises immigrants upon their arrival in the spirit of our Founder.

### **Life Programs**

#### **St. Mary of the Hills Council 13950**

**Rochester Hills, Michigan**

***Fr. McGivney Field of Dreams***

St. Mary of the Hills Council 13950 spearheaded the efforts of 43 councils from Wayne, Macomb and Oakland counties within the Archdiocese of Detroit to raise \$65,000 for an ADA-compliant baseball field. Thanks to their efforts, the Michigan Knights received naming rights to the new "Blessed Father Michael J. McGivney Field." The field is primarily used by members of the Clinton Valley Little League Challenger Division Senior League, which is for people with special needs ages 16 and up. It features large dugouts to accommodate wheelchairs and rubberized paths that make it easier for wheelchairs and walkers to maneuver. During the dedication ceremony, Fourth Degree Knights processed onto the field, leading members of the contributing councils. A Knight's daughter who has Down syndrome sang the national anthem, and Auxiliary Bishop Robert Fisher of Detroit offered a prayer of dedication and blessing over the field. Council 13950's ongoing efforts to support people with special needs is a testament to their commitment to fulfilling the Order's mission to defend the dignity of every human being.

### **International Family of the Year**

**The Duppong Family**

**Bishop Ryan Council 4004**

**Glen Ullin, North Dakota**

From the very beginning, faith has been at the center of the Duppongs' family life – from their daily family rosary, to enthroning the Sacred Heart of Jesus in their home, to organizing Corpus

Christi celebrations near their family farm – God has always come first. This faith was passed down from Ken and his wife, Mary Ann, who have been married for 52 years, to their 6 children and 18 grandchildren. Today, the family remains close and puts their faith in action through service to their parish and community.

Ken has been a Knight for 53 years, and has held several leadership roles, including serving as grand knight for 5 years. He and Mary Ann have been incredibly active in their parishes and communities, volunteering in many different capacities over the years such as leading rosaries at Sunday Masses, managing the parish bookstore, hosting parish faith studies, visiting the local nursing home, helping with church repair and preservation and participating in pro-life events.

Ken and Mary Ann's children - Jeff, Lisa, Sara, Michelle, Renae and Kalene - have been exemplars of the Catholic faith in their adult lives. Their son, Jeff, and sons-in-law, Kyle and Brad, are Knights. Michelle and Renae served as FOCUS campus missionaries. Lisa volunteers in her children's Christian homeschooling community, while Kalene has devoted herself to developing local Catholic Montessori programs for children. Sara volunteers at her parish, her children's Catholic school and with various community groups. Renae continues her evangelization work with people of all ages and also engages in healing ministry. The rest of the Duppong family, including spouses and grandchildren, are also active members of their schools, parishes and dioceses.

Notably, the cause for canonization was opened for their daughter, Michelle, who died of cancer in 2015 at the age of 31. In 2022, she received from the Church the title *Servant of God* for her life of holiness. The Duppongs have spent the last twenty years hosting hundreds of people at their family farm for faith-related social events and retreats, and more recently in sharing the story of their daughter Michelle's life with people coming to visit her grave.

Throughout their lives, members of the Duppong family have relied on their faith and thirsted for the truth and hope that the Church offers. Today, the family continues to share Michelle's story of joy and trust in God, as well as their own wisdom, to help strengthen Catholic families in the modern world.

### **Blessed Michael McGivney Medal**

This award is given annually to a Knights of Columbus chaplain whose priestly zeal and exemplary service are in the finest traditions of our Founder. The 2025 recipient of the Blessed Michael McGivney Medal is:

**Fr. Frank Donio, S.A.C., DMin**  
**State Chaplain of the District of Columbia**  
**Chaplain, The Catholic University of America Council 9542**  
**Faithful Friar, James Cardinal Hickey Assembly 2534**  
**Washington, D.C.**

Fr. Frank Donio, S.A.C. has an extensive history of service to the Knights of Columbus and the Church.

While he was an undergraduate student at The Catholic University of America, Fr. Donio helped found Knights of Columbus Council 9542 on campus. He has now served as the chaplain for that very same council for almost 2 decades. Fr. Donio also serves as the state chaplain of D.C. and as faithful friar of Assembly 2534.

As Council 9542's chaplain, Fr. Donio has been a spiritual father to many young adults discerning their vocations, offering advice and encouragement to guide them to God's will for their lives and hosting a yearly discernment retreat for council members. Since Fr. Frank became chaplain, at least 20 men have become priests thanks to his influence and encouragement, including former members of Council 9542. Present and former council members testify to his unwavering dedication and profound impact on their understanding of the faith and their relationship with Christ.

Despite his many obligations, Fr. Donio always finds time to attend to the spiritual needs of students, participate in council meetings and exemplifications and provide pastoral guidance to members, even after they graduate. On campus, he offers a weekly "Knight Mass" for the entire Catholic community. He also hosts a semi-annual "OverKnight" event, where he offers Mass and provides a homecooked meal for members of the council.

In addition to his extensive service to the Knights of Columbus, Fr. Donio is the Executive Director for the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and holds leadership roles in the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottines) of which he is a member. He is the Founding Director of the Catholic Apostolate Center and works with several Secretariats of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, national and international Catholic organizations, religious communities and dioceses on evangelization, co-responsibility, collaboration in ministry, Church leadership and pastoral planning. He also teaches at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America.

### **About the Knights of Columbus**

In 1882, Blessed Michael McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus to serve the needs of a largely immigrant Catholic community. What began as a small fraternal benefit society has since grown into the world's premier lay Catholic men's organization, with more than 2.1 million members in over 16,800 local councils. As members of one of the world's leading charitable organizations, Knights donated more than 47 million service hours and over \$190 million for worthy causes in their communities in 2023. The Knights of Columbus also offers a range of life insurance products to members and their families. Knights of Columbus Insurance has more than \$124 billion\* of life insurance in force. In addition, the organization offers investment services in accord with Catholic social teaching through its wholly owned subsidiary, Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, which holds more than \$28 billion\*\* in assets under management. Guided by the principles of charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism, the Knights of Columbus is committed to strengthening Catholic families and parishes, by enabling men to grow in their faith and put that faith into action through service to all in need. To learn more or to join the Knights of Columbus, please visit [kofc.org/join](http://kofc.org/join).

\*As of June 30, 2025

\*\*As of June 10, 2025

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