

Knights of Columbus

Knights of Columbus	
 Knights of Columbus Emblem	
Abbreviation	KofC
Motto	In service to One, In service to all.
Formation	March 29, 1882
Type	Catholic fraternal service organization
Headquarters	1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, Connecticut, USA
Founder	Venerable Michael J. McGivney
Supreme Knight	Carl A. Anderson
Supreme Chaplain	Archbishop William E. Lori
Website	www.kofc.org ^[1]

The Knights of Columbus is the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. It was founded by the Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1882, and named in honor of the navigator Christopher Columbus. Originally serving as a mutual benefit society to low-income immigrant Catholics, it developed into a fraternal service organization dedicated to providing charitable services, promoting Catholic education and actively defending Catholicism in various nations.

There are more than 1.8 million members in 15,000 councils, with nearly 200 councils on college campuses. Membership is limited to "practical Catholic" men aged 18 or older. Membership consists of 4 different degrees, each exemplifying a different principle of the Order. The Order is a member of the International Alliance of Catholic Knights. Most meetings follow a strict protocol based on guidelines from the National Home Office.

Councils have been chartered in the United States (including American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands), Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Guatemala, Panama, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Guam, Spain, Japan, Cuba, and most recently in Poland and Ukraine. The Knights' official junior organization, the Columbian Squires, has over 5,000 Circles.

For their support for the Church and local communities, as well as for their philanthropic efforts, the Order often refers to itself as the "strong right arm of the Church." In the 2010 fiscal year, the Order gave over US\$154 million directly to charity (over \$1.406 billion in charitable contributions and 653 million man hours in the last 10 years) and performed over 70 million man-hours of voluntary service. Over 413,000 pints of blood were donated. The Order's insurance program has more than \$80 billion of life insurance policies in force, backed up by \$15.5 billion in assets, and holds the highest insurance ratings given by A. M. Best and the Insurance Marketplace Standards Association.

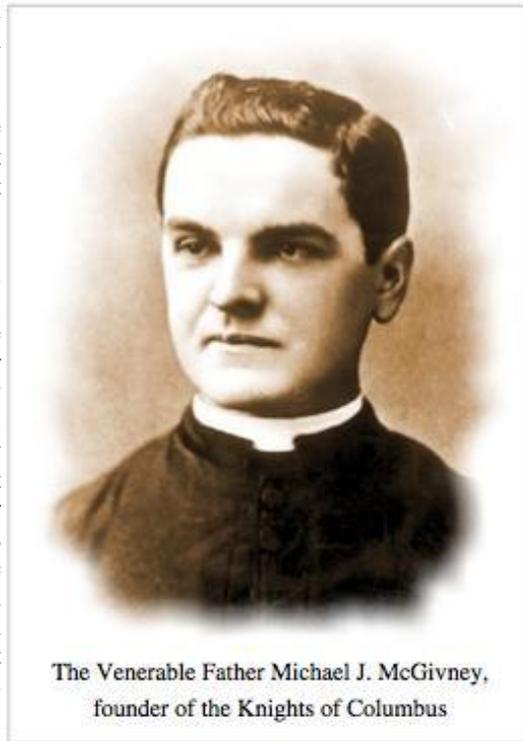
Within the United States on the national and state level, the Order is active in the political arena lobbying for laws and positions that uphold the Catholic Church's positions on public policy and social issues.

History

Founding

The Knights of Columbus was founded by an Irish-American Catholic priest, the Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney in New Haven, Connecticut. He gathered a group of men from St. Mary's Parish for an organizational meeting on October 2, 1881 and the Order was incorporated under the laws of the state of Connecticut on March 29, 1882. Though the first councils were all in that state, the Order spread throughout New England and the United States in subsequent years.

The primary motivation for the Order was to be a mutual benefit society. As a parish priest in an immigrant community, McGivney saw what could happen to a family when the breadwinner died, and wanted to provide insurance to care for the widows and orphans left behind. He had to temporarily leave his seminary studies to care for his family when his father died. In the late 19th century, Catholics were regularly excluded from labor unions and other organizations that provided social services. In addition, Catholics were either barred from many of the popular fraternal organizations, or, as in the case of Freemasonry, forbidden from joining by the Catholic Church itself. McGivney wished to provide them an alternative. He also believed that Catholicism and fraternalism were not incompatible and wished to found a society that would encourage men to be proud of their American-Catholic heritage.



The Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney,
founder of the Knights of Columbus

McGivney traveled to Boston to examine the Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters and to Brooklyn to learn about the recently established Catholic Benevolent League, both of which offered insurance benefits. He found the latter to be lacking the excitement he thought was needed if his organization were to compete with the secret societies of the day. He expressed an interest in establishing a New Haven Court of the Foresters, but the charter of Massachusetts Foresters prevented them from operating outside their Commonwealth. The committee of St. Mary's parishioners which McGivney had assembled then decided to form a club that was entirely original.

McGivney had originally conceived of the name "Sons of Columbus", but James T. Mullen, who would become the first Supreme Knight, successfully suggested that "Knights of Columbus" would better capture the ritualistic nature of the new organization.



Christopher Columbus is the patron and namesake of the Knights.

The name of Columbus was also partially intended as a mild rebuke to Anglo-Saxon Protestant leaders, who upheld the explorer (a Catholic Genovese Italian working for Catholic Spain) as an American hero, yet simultaneously sought to marginalize recent Catholic immigrants. In taking Columbus as their patron, they were sending the message that not only could Catholics be full members of American society, but were, in fact, instrumental in its foundation.

By the time of the first annual convention in 1884, the Order was prospering. In the five councils throughout Connecticut there were 459 members. Groups from other states were requesting information. The Charter of 1899 included four statements of purpose, including "to promote such social and intellectual intercourse among its members as shall be desirable and proper, and by such lawful means as to them shall seem best." The new charter showed members' desire to grow the organization beyond a simple mutual benefit insurance society.

The original insurance system devised by McGivney gave a deceased Knight's widow a \$1,000 death benefit. Each member was assessed \$1 upon a death, and when the number of Knights grew beyond 1,000 the assessment decreased according to the rate of increase. Each member, regardless of age, was assessed equally. As a result, younger, healthier members could expect to pay more over the course of their lifetimes than those men who joined when they were older. There was also a Sick Benefit Deposit for members who fell ill and could not work. Each sick Knight was entitled to draw up to \$5 a week for 13 weeks (roughly equivalent to \$125.75 in 2009 dollars). If he remained sick after that, the council to which he belonged regulated the sum of money given to him.

Around 1912 it was claimed that fourth degree Knights had to swear an oath to exterminate Freemasons and Protestants. Despite the fact that it was denied, and the real oath published, this was read into the congressional record by Thomas S. Butler. In the 1928 Presidential election a million copies were printed to hurt the campaign of the Catholic Democratic candidate Al Smith.

In 2010, the cause for McGivney's canonization was before the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and a guild has been formed to promote his cause. On March 15, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI approved a decree recognizing McGivney's "heroic virtue," significantly advancing the priest's process toward sainthood. McGivney can now be referred to as the "Venerable Servant of God." If the cause is successful, he will be the first priest born in the United States to be canonized as a saint.

Racial Integration in the U.S.

While some councils were integrated, increasing pressure came from Church officials and organizations to change its blackball system. Supreme Knight Luke E. Hart was actively encouraging councils to accept black candidates by the end of the 1950s.

In 1963 Hart attended a special meeting at the White House hosted by President Kennedy to discuss civil rights with other religious leaders. A few months later, a Notre Dame alumnus' application was rejected because he was black. Six council officers resigned in protest and the incident made national news. Hart then declared that the process for membership would be revised at the next Supreme Convention, but died before he could see it take place.

The 1964 Supreme Convention was scheduled to be held at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. A few days before the Convention, new Supreme Knight John W. McDevitt learned the hotel only admitted white guests and immediately threatened to move to another venue. The hotel changed its policy and so did the Order. The Convention amended the admissions rule to require one-third of those voting to reject a new member and in 1972 the Supreme Convention again amended its rules to require a majority of members voting to reject a candidate.

Organization

Supreme Knight	Supreme Chaplain
Carl A. Anderson	Bishop William E. Lori
Deputy Supreme Knight	Dennis Savoie
Supreme Secretary	Charles E. Maurer Jr.
Supreme Treasurer	Logan T. Ludwig
Supreme Advocate	John Marrella
Supreme Warden	George Hanna
Supreme Master	Dennis Stoddard

The Supreme Council is the governing body of the Order and is composed of elected representatives from each jurisdiction. The Supreme Council acts in similar manner to shareholders at an annual meeting, and each year elects seven members to the Supreme Board of Directors for three-year terms. The twenty-one member board then chooses from its own membership the senior operating officials of the Order, including the Supreme Knight.

Degrees and principles

The Order is dedicated to the principles of Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. A First Degree exemplification ceremony, by which a man joins the Order, explicates the virtue of charity. He is then said to be a First Degree Knight of Columbus; after participating the subsequent degrees, each of which focuses on another virtue, he rises to that status. Upon reaching the Third Degree, a gentleman is considered a full member. Priests do not participate directly in Degree exemplifications as laymen do, but rather take the degree by observation.

The first ritual handbook was printed in 1885, but contained only sections teaching Unity and Charity. Supreme Knight Mullen, along with primary ritual author Daniel Colwell, believed that the initiation ceremony should be held in three sections "in accord with the 'Trinity of Virtues, Charity, Unity, and Brotherly love.'" The third section, expounding Fraternity, was officially adopted in 1891. The third degree is the highest degree a Knights of Columbus member can obtain. The fourth degree is a separate honor and is not higher than the third degree. A member must be a third degree Knight before becoming a fourth degree however.

Fourth Degree

Rank	Color
Supreme Master	Dark Blue Cape and Chapeau
Vice Supreme Master	Light Blue Cape and Chapeau
Master	Gold Cape and Chapeau
District Marshall	Green Cape and Chapeau
Faithful Navigator	White Cape and Chapeau
Assembly Commander	Purple Cape and Chapeau
Color Corps Members	Red Cape and White Chapeau

The Fourth Degree is the highest degree of the order. It is an extension of the third degree. Members of this degree are addressed as "Sir Knight". The primary purpose of the Fourth Degree is to foster the spirit of patriotism and to encourage active Catholic citizenship. Fewer than 18% of Knights join the Fourth Degree,

which is optional; of a total 1,703,307 Knights in 2006 there were 292,289 Fourth Degree Knights. A Knight is eligible to join the Fourth Degree after he has taken his third degree.



Knights of Columbus Color Corps marching in full regalia for a St. Patrick's Day Parade in Fort Collins, Colorado

Only Fourth Degree Knights may optionally purchase and wear the full regalia and join the Assembly's Color Corps. The Color Corps is the most visible arm of the Knights, as they are often seen in parades and other local events wearing their colorful regalia. Official dress for the Color Corps is a black tuxedo, baldric, white gloves, cape and naval chapeau. In warm climates and during warm months a white dinner jacket may be worn, if done as a unit. Baldrics are worn from the right shoulder to left hip and are color specific by nation. In the United States, Panama and the Philippines, baldrics are red, white and blue. Red and white baldrics are used in Canada and Poland; red, white and green in Mexico; and blue and white in Guatemala. Service baldrics include a scabbard for a sword and are worn over the coat while social baldrics are worn under the coat. The colors on a Fourth Degree Knight's cape and chapeau denote the office he holds within the Degree. Faithful Navigators and Past Faithful Navigators are permitted to carry a white handled silver sword. Masters and Vice Supreme Masters, as well as Former Masters and Former Vice Supreme Masters, are also denoted by their gold swords.

The need for a patriotic degree was first considered in 1886, and a special plea was made at the National Meeting of 1899. The first Fourth Degree exemplification followed in 1900 with 1,100 Knights participating at the Lenox Lyceum in New York City. Today there are more than 2,500 Assemblies.



Knights of Columbus chapeau worn only by Fourth Degree Knights

Insurance program

The Order offers a modern, professional insurance operation with more than \$80 billion of life insurance policies in force and \$15.6 billion in assets as of June 2012. Products include permanent and term life insurance as well as annuities, long term care insurance, and disability insurance. The insurance program is not a separate business offered by the Order to others but is exclusively for the benefit of members and their families. The order paid over \$243 million in death benefits in 2009 and \$1.7 billion between 2000 and 2010. This is large enough to rank 49th on the A.M Best list of all life insurance companies in North America. According to the 2011 Fortune 1000 list, the Knights of Columbus ranks 900 in total revenue.

Only two other insurers in North America have received the highest ratings from both A. M. Best and Standard & Poor's. Additionally, the Order is certified by the Insurance Marketplace Standards Association for ethical sales practices. Standard & Poor's downgraded the insurance program's financial strength/credit rating from AAA to AA+ in August 2011 not due to the Order's financial strength, but due to its lowering of the long-term sovereign credit rating of the United States to AA+.

Charitable giving

Charity is the foremost principle of the Knights of Columbus. In the 2011 fiscal year the Order gave more than \$158 million directly to charity and performed over 70 million man hours in volunteer service.

The Knights have a tradition of supporting those with physical and developmental disabilities. More than \$382 million has been given over the past three decades to groups and programs that support the intellectually and physically disabled. One of the largest recipients of funds in this area is the Special Olympics.

The *Vicarius Christi* Fund has an endowment of \$20 million and has earned more than \$35 million since its establishment in 1981 for the Pope's personal charities. The multimillion dollar *Pacem in Terris* Fund aids the Catholic Church's efforts for peace in the Middle East. The Order also has eleven separate funds totaling \$18 million to assist men and women who are discerning religious vocations pay tuition and other expenses.

The Knights' Satellite Uplink Program has provided funding to broadcast a number of papal events, including the annual Easter and Christmas Masses, as well as the World Day of Peace in Assisi, World Youth Days, the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica's for the Millennium Jubilee, Pope John Paul II's visit to Nazareth, and several other events. In missionary territories the Order also pays for the satellite downlink.

United in Charity, a general, unrestricted endowment fund, was introduced at the 2004 Supreme Council meeting to support and ensure the overall long-term charitable and philanthropic goals of the Order. The fund is wholly managed, maintained and operated by Knights of Columbus Charities, Inc., a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Before United in Charity was formed, all requests for funds were met with the general funds of the Order or in combination with specific appeals.



The Order funded the first renovation of the façade of St. Peter's Basilica in over 350 years. □

Aside from their other charitable activities, The Knights of Columbus gave significant charitable contributions to the people of Haiti in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in January 2010. The Order also donated 1,000 wheelchairs to the people of Haiti in partnership with the Global Wheelchair Mission.

Recognizing that the need was still great in Haiti some seven months after the disaster, the Knights of Columbus partnered with Project Medishare in August 2010 for an initiative entitled, "Healing Haiti's Children." The initiative, backed by a more than \$1 million commitment from the Knights of Columbus provides free prosthetic limbs and a minimum of two years of rehab to every child who suffered an amputation because injuries sustained during the earthquake. In January 2011, the Order announced that 100 children had already been aided by the program.

Ever since its founding, the Knights of Columbus has also been involved in evangelization. In 1948, the Knights started the Catholic Information Service (CIS) to provide low-cost Catholic publications for the general public as well as for parishes, schools, retreat houses, military installations, correctional facilities, legislatures, the medical community, and for individuals who request them. Since then, CIS has printed millions of booklets, and thousands of people have enrolled in CIS correspondence and on-line courses.

College Councils

The University of Notre Dame Council 1477 was founded in 1910, and is currently the largest college council in the country. It was followed by the councils at St. Louis University and Benedictine College. In 1919, Mount St. Mary's College and Seminary Council 1965 became the first council attached to a seminary, at what is now Mount St. Mary's University.

Each October, the Supreme Council hosts a College Council Conference at their headquarters in New Haven, Connecticut. Awards are given for the greatest increases in membership, the best Youth, Community, Council, Family and Church activities, and the overall Outstanding College Council of the year. The Georgetown University Council 6375 was the 2011 Outstanding College Council.

Columbian Squires

Squire Advancement Program
Level 1: Page
Level 2: Shield Bearer
Level 3: Swordsman
Level 4: Lancer
Level 5: Squire of the Body of Christ

The Knights' official junior organization is the Columbian Squires. Founded in 1925 in Duluth, Minnesota, this international fraternity for boys 10–18 has grown to over 5,000 circles. According to Brother Barnabas McDonald, F.S.C., the Squires' founder, "The supreme purpose of the Columbian Squires is character building." Squires have fun and share their Catholic faith, help people in need, and enjoy the company of friends in social, family, athletic, cultural, civic and spiritual activities. Through their local circle, Squires work and socialize as a group of friends, elect their own officers, and develop into Catholic leaders.

Each Circle is supervised by a Knights of Columbus Council or Assembly, and has an advisory board made up of either the Grand Knight, the Deputy Grand Knight and Chaplain, or the Faithful Navigator, the Faithful Captain and Faithful Friar. Circles are either Council based, parish based, or school based, depending on the location of the circle and the Knight counselors.

Squire Roses

The Squire Roses are a youth sorority run by individual State Councils for Catholic girls between the ages of 10 and 19. They are a sister organization to the Squires. The Squire Roses were created in 1996 by adoption of the Virginia State Council of Knights of Columbus. The founder of this organization was Russell DeRose.

Emblems of the Order

Emblem of the Order

The emblem of the Order was designed by Past Supreme Knight James T. Mullen and adopted at the second Supreme Council meeting on May 12, 1883. Shields used by medieval knights served as the inspiration, and the emblem consists of a shield mounted on a Formée cross, which is an artistic representation of the cross of Christ. This serves to represent the Catholic identity of the Order.

Mounted on the shield are three objects: a fasces, an anchor, and a dagger. The fasces in ancient Rome was carried before magistrates as an emblem of authority. The Order uses it as "symbolic of authority which must exist in any tightly-bonded and efficiently operating organization." The anchor is used to represent Christopher Columbus, patron of the Order. The short sword or dagger was the weapon used by medieval Knights. The shield as a whole with the letters "K of C" represents "Catholic Knighthood in organized merciful action."

Each Knight receives the emblem as a lapel pin upon initiation.

Fourth Degree emblem

The Fourth Degree emblem features a dove, a cross, and a globe. In the tradition of the Knights these symbols "typify the union of the three Divine Persons in one Godhead, referred to as the most Blessed Trinity." The red, white and blue are taken from the American flag, to represent patriotism, the basic principle of the Fourth Degree. The globe is used as a symbol to represent God the Father. It is styled as a blue globe with the continents of the Western Hemisphere in white. The red cross is a symbol for God the Son. This cross is based on a cross known as the Isabella cross, after the Queen of Spain who sponsored Columbus. The white dove is a symbol of God the Holy Spirit and is also a symbol of peace. Incidentally, Columbus' name in Italian (*Colombo*) also means "dove."



Fourth Degree emblem

Knights of Columbus protocol

Like most fraternal orders, the Knights have a protocol, which dictates the order of rank within the Order, and is typically used at formal functions or presentations in the Order. Supreme is the highest rank within the Order and rank works its way down from there. Officers hold a higher rank than general members in councils and assemblies.

All the Order's ceremonials and business meetings are restricted to members and invited guests.

Officers

Knights of Columbus Councils, Fourth Degree Assemblies, and Columbian Squire Circles have similar officers. In the Councils, officer titles are prefixed with "Worthy," while in Assemblies officer titles are prefixed with "Faithful." In addition to the Columbian Squires' officers listed below, there is an adult position of "Chief Counselor" that helps oversee the Circle.

Council	Assembly	Circle
Grand Knight	Navigator	Chief Squire
Chaplain*	Friar*	Father Prior
Deputy Grand Knight	Captain	Deputy Chief Squire
Chancellor	Admiral	Marshall Squire
Recorder	Scribe	Notary Squire
Financial Secretary**	Comptroller	Bursar Squire
Treasurer	Purser	Bursar Squire
Lecturer*	<i>nonexistent</i>	<i>nonexistent</i>
Advocate	<i>nonexistent</i>	<i>nonexistent</i>

Warden	Pilot	Marshall Squire
Inside Guard	Inner Sentinel	Sentry
Outside Guard	Outer Sentinel	Sentry
Trustee (3 Year)	Trustee (3 Year)	<i>nonexistent</i>
Trustee (2 Year)	Trustee (2 Year)	<i>nonexistent</i>
Trustee (1 Year)	Trustee (1 Year)	<i>nonexistent</i>
<i>nonexistent</i>	Color Corp Commander	<i>nonexistent</i>

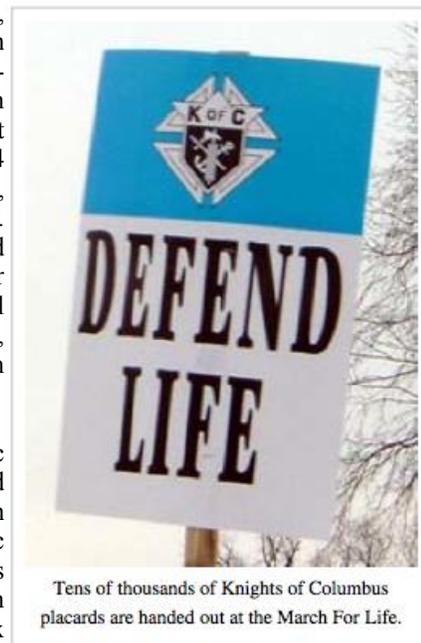
(*Appointed annually by each Council's Grand Knight or Assembly's Navigator)

(**Appointed for a 3-year term by the Supreme Knight)

Political activities

In 1954, lobbying by the Order helped convince the U.S. Congress to add the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance. President Dwight Eisenhower wrote to Supreme Knight Luke E. Hart thanking the Knights for their part in the movement to have the words 'under God' added to our Pledge of Allegiance." Similar lobbying convinced many state legislatures to adopt October 12 as Columbus Day and led to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's confirmation of Columbus Day as a federal holiday in 1937.

While the Knights of Columbus support political awareness and activity, United States councils are prohibited by tax laws from engaging in candidate endorsement and partisan political activity due to their non-profit status. In the election year of 1992, President George H.W. Bush appeared at the annual convention and President George W. Bush sent videotaped messages before he attended in person at the 2004 convention. Public policy activity is limited to issue-specific campaigns, typically dealing with Catholic family and life issues. When George W. Bush spoke at the 2004 convention, the assembled delegates chanted "Four More Years!" and Supreme Knight Carl Anderson thanked him for "supporting the right to life of unborn children" and "for restoring moral integrity to the office of the presidency. Bush's Democratic opponent, John Kerry, a Catholic dissenter from the Church's teachings on abortion, was not invited to address the 2004 convention.



Tens of thousands of Knights of Columbus placards are handed out at the March For Life.

In the United States, the Knights of Columbus uphold the Catholic Church's position on public policy and social issues. They have adopted resolutions advocating a Culture of Life, defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and promoting Catholic practices in public schools, government, and voluntary organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America. The Order also funded a postcard campaign in 2005 in an attempt to stop the Canadian parliament from legalizing same-sex marriage.

On April 9, 2006 the Board of Directors commented on the "U.S. immigration policy [which] has become an intensely debated and divisive issue on both sides of the border between the U.S. and Mexico." They called "upon the President and the U.S. Congress to agree upon immigration legislation that not only gains control over the process of immigration, but also rejects any effort to criminalize those who provide humanitarian assistance to illegal immigrants, and provides these immigrants an avenue by which they can emerge from the shadows of society and seek legal residency and citizenship in the U.S."

In California's 2008 election the Knights of Columbus attracted media attention when they donated more than \$1.4 million to Proposition 8, which succeeded in banning marriages between same-sex couples in the state. A group called "Californians Against Hate", viewing Proposition 8 as a denial of civil rights and a promotion of inequality, has added the Knights of Columbus to their "Dishonor Roll".

Heads of state

The Knights of Columbus invites the head of state of every country they operate in to the Supreme Convention each year. In 1971, U.S. President Richard Nixon gave the keynote address at the States Dinner; Secretary of Transportation and Knight John Volpe was responsible for this first appearance of a U.S. President at a Supreme Council gathering. President Ronald Reagan spoke at the Centennial Convention in 1982. President George H.W. Bush appeared in 1992. President Bill Clinton sent a written message while he was in office, and President George W. Bush sent videotaped messages before he attended in person at the 2004 convention.

John F. Kennedy, the only Catholic to be elected President of the United States, was a Fourth Degree member of Bunker Hill Council No. 62 and Bishop Cheverus General Assembly. Supreme Knight Luke E. Hart visited Kennedy at the White House on Columbus Day, 1961. The president told Hart that his younger brother, Ted Kennedy, had received "his Third Degree in our Order three weeks before." Hart presented Kennedy with a poster of the American Flag with the story of how the Order got the words "under God" inserted in the Pledge of Allegiance. In 1959 Fidel Castro sent an aide to represent him at a Fourth Degree banquet in honor of the Golden Jubilee of the Order's entry into Cuba. Supreme Knight Hart attended a banquet in the Cuban Prime Minister's honor in April of that year sponsored by the Overseas Press Club and later sent him a letter expressing regret that they were not able to meet in person.

Knights of Columbus were among the groups that welcomed Pope Benedict XVI on the South Lawn of the White House on April 16, 2008, the pontiff's 81st birthday, during his visit to the U.S..

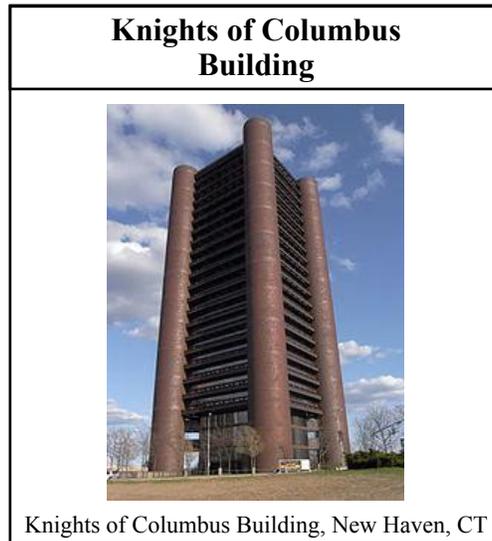


George W. Bush greets Fourth Degree Knights at the 122nd Annual Convention.



Members of the Knights of Columbus salute during the welcoming ceremony for Pope Benedict XVI on the South Lawn of the White House (April 16, 2008)

Notable buildings



Famous Knights

Many famous Catholic men from all over the world have been Knights of Columbus. In the United States, some of the most notable include John F. Kennedy; Ted Kennedy; Al Smith; Sargent Shriver; Samuel Alito; John Boehner; Ray Flynn; Jeb Bush; and Sergeant Major Daniel Daly, a two-time Medal of Honor recipient, once described by the commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps as "the most outstanding Marine of all time".

Many notable clerics are also Knights, including Cardinal William Joseph Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Cardinal Sean O'Malley, archbishop of Boston; and Cardinal Jaime Sin, former archbishop of Manila. In the world of sports, Vince Lombardi, the famed former coach of the Green Bay Packers; wrestler Lou Albano; James Connolly, the first Olympic gold-medal champion in modern times; Floyd Patterson, former heavyweight boxing champion; and baseball legend Babe Ruth were all knights.

On October 15, 2006, Bishop Rafael Guizar Valencia (1878–1938) was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in Rome. In 2000, six other Knights were declared saints by Pope John Paul II.

Canada Hall incident

In 2005, a local Knights of Columbus council in Canada was fined \$2,000 by the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal. The Council's Hall Manager signed a contract for the use of their facilities with Tracey Smith and Deborah Chymyshyn, but canceled it and returned their money after they became aware that it was for a lesbian wedding reception.

Similar organizations

The Knights of Columbus is a member of the International Alliance of Catholic Knights, which includes fifteen fraternal orders such as the Knights of Saint Columbanus in Ireland, the Knights of Saint Columba in the United Kingdom, the Knights of Peter Claver in the United States, the Knights of the Southern Cross in Australia and New Zealand, the Knights of Da Gama in South Africa, and the Knights of St. Mulumba in Nigeria.

Many councils also have women's auxiliaries. At the turn of the 20th century two were formed by local councils and each took the name the Daughters of Isabella. Using the same name, both groups expanded and issued charters to other Circles but never merged. The newer organization renamed itself the Catholic Daughters of the Americas in 1921 and both have structures independent of the Knights of Columbus. Other groups are known as the Columbiettes. In the Philippines, the ladies' auxiliary is known as the Daughters of Mary Immaculate.