

# Knights of Columbus

The **Knights of Columbus** is the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. Founded by Michael J. McGivney in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1882, it was named in honor of the explorer Christopher Columbus. Originally serving as a mutual benefit society to working-class and immigrant Catholics in the United States, it developed into a fraternal benefit society dedicated to providing charitable services, including war and disaster relief, actively defending Catholicism in various nations, and promoting Catholic education.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> The Knights also support the Catholic Church's positions on public policy issues, including various political causes, and are participants in the New Evangelization. The current Supreme Knight is Carl A. Anderson.

There are over 1.9 million members around the world.<sup>[4]</sup> Membership is limited to practicing Catholic men aged 18 or older.<sup>[nb 1]</sup> The Order consists of four different degrees, each exemplifying a different principle of the order.<sup>[6][5]</sup> The nearly 15,000 councils,<sup>[7]</sup> including over 300 on college campuses,<sup>[4]</sup> are chartered in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Philippines, and around the world.<sup>[8]</sup> The Knights' official junior organization, the Columbian Squires, has more than 5,000 circles, and the order's patriotic arm, the Fourth Degree, has more than 2,500 assemblies.<sup>[9]</sup>

Pope John Paul II referred to the order as the "strong right arm of the Church" for their support of the church, as well as for their philanthropic and charitable efforts.<sup>[10]</sup> In 2015, the order gave over US\$175 million directly to charity and performed over 73.5 million man-hours of voluntary service,<sup>[11]</sup> part of the \$1.55 billion given to charity over the past 10 years.<sup>[12]</sup>

The Knights are also well known for their insurance program with more than 2 million insurance contracts, totaling more than US\$100 billion of life insurance in force.<sup>[13]</sup> This is backed by \$21 billion in assets as of 2014.<sup>[13]</sup> This places it on the Forbes 1000 list.<sup>[13]</sup> The Order also owns the Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, a money management firm that invests in accordance with Catholic social teachings.<sup>[14]</sup>

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## Knights of Columbus



Emblem of the Knights of Columbus

<b>Abbreviation</b>	K of C
<b>Formation</b>	March 29, 1882
<b>Type</b>	Catholic fraternal service organization
<b>Headquarters</b>	Knights of Columbus Building, New Haven, Connecticut, US
<b>Founder</b>	Venerable Michael J. McGivney
<b>Supreme Knight</b>	Carl A. Anderson
<b>Supreme Chaplain</b>	William E. Lori
<b>Affiliations</b>	International Alliance of Catholic Knights Columbian Squires
<b>Website</b>	www.kofc.org (http://www.kofc.org)

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### **Early years**

Michael J. McGivney, an Irish-American Catholic priest, founded the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, Connecticut. He gathered a group of men from St. Mary's Parish for an organizational meeting on October 2, 1881. Several months later, the order was incorporated under the laws of the state of Connecticut on March 29, 1882.<sup>[2]</sup> Although its first councils were all in Connecticut, the order spread throughout New England and the United States.

The order was intended to be a mutual benefit society. These organizations, which combined social aspects and ritual, were especially flourishing during the latter third of the nineteenth century.<sup>[15]</sup> As a parish priest in an immigrant community, McGivney saw what could happen to a family when the main income earner died. This was before most government support programs were established. He wanted to provide insurance to care for the widows and orphans left behind. In his own life, he temporarily had to suspend his seminary studies to care for his family after his father died.<sup>[16]</sup>

Because of religious and ethnic discrimination, Roman Catholics in the late 19th century were regularly excluded from labor unions, popular fraternal organizations, and other organized groups that provided such social services.<sup>[17]</sup> Papal encyclicals issued by the Holy See prohibited Catholics from participating as lodge members within Freemasonry. McGivney intended to create an alternative organization.<sup>[18]</sup>

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.<sup>[19]</sup> 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.<sup>[20]</sup> 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<sup>[21]</sup>). If he remained sick after that, the council to which he belonged determined the sum of money given to him.<sup>[22]</sup>

From the earliest days of the order, members wanted to create a form of hierarchy and recognition for senior members.<sup>[23][24]</sup> As early as 1886, Supreme Knight James T. Mullen had proposed a patriotic degree with its own symbolic dress.<sup>[25]</sup> About 1,400 members attended the first exemplification of the Fourth Degree at the Lenox Lyceum in New York on February 22, 1900.<sup>[23][24]</sup>

## Early 20th century

To prove that good Catholics could also be good Americans, during World War I the Knights supported the war effort and the troops. It was hoped that this would help mitigate some of the American anti-Catholicism. Supreme Knight James A. Flaherty proposed to US President Woodrow Wilson that the order establish soldiers' welfare centers in the US and abroad. The organization already had experience, having provided similar services to troops encamped on the Mexican border during Pershing's expedition of 1916.<sup>[26]</sup> With the slogan "Everyone Welcome, Everything Free," the "huts" became recreation/service centers for doughboys regardless of race or religion. They were staffed by "secretaries," commonly referred to as "Caseys" (for K of C) who were generally men above the age of military service. The centers provided basic amenities not readily available, such as stationery, hot baths, and religious services.<sup>[27]</sup> After the war, the Knights became involved in education, occupational training, and employment programs for the returning troops.<sup>[26]</sup> As a result of this,

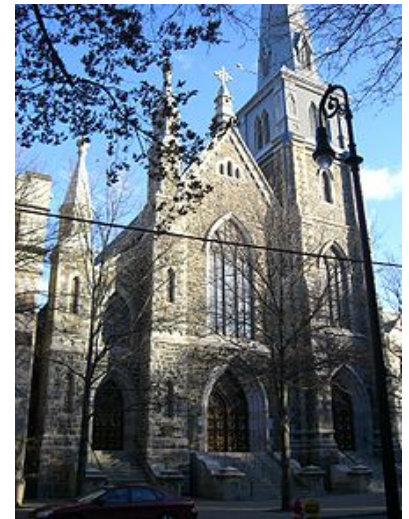
the Order was infused with the self-confidence that it could respond with organizational skill and with social and political power to any need of Church and society. In this sense, the K. of C. reflected the passage of American Catholicism from an immigrant Church to a well-established and respected religious denomination which had proven its patriotic loyalty in the acid test of the Great War.<sup>[28][12]</sup>

During the nadir of American race relations, a bogus oath was circulated claiming that Fourth Degree Knights swore to exterminate Freemasons and Protestants.<sup>[29][30]</sup> The Ku Klux Klan (KKK), which was growing into a newly powerful force through the 1920s, spread the bogus oath far and wide as part of their contemporary campaign against Catholics.<sup>[31]</sup> Numerous state councils and the Supreme Council believed publication would stop if the KKK were assessed fines or punished by jail time assessed and began suing distributors for libel.<sup>[32]</sup> As a result, the KKK ended its publication of the false oath. As the order did not wish to appear motivated by a "vengeful spirit," it asked for leniency from judges when sentencing offenders.<sup>[32]</sup>

After World War I, many native-born Americans had a revival of concerns about assimilation of immigrants and worries about "foreign" values; they wanted public schools to teach children to be American. Numerous states drafted laws designed to use schools to promote a common American culture, and in 1922, the voters of Oregon passed the Oregon Compulsory Education Act. The law was primarily aimed at eliminating parochial schools, including Catholic schools.<sup>[33][34]</sup> The Compulsory Education Act required almost all children in Oregon



Michael J. McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus



St. Mary's Church



See him through – Help us to help the boys

between eight and sixteen years of age to attend public school by 1926.<sup>[35]</sup> Roger Nash Baldwin, an associate director of the ACLU and a personal friend of then-Supreme Advocate and future Supreme Knight Luke E. Hart, offered to join forces with the order to challenge the law. The Knights of Columbus pledged an immediate \$10,000 to fight the law and any additional funds necessary to defeat it.<sup>[36]</sup> The case became known as *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* and in a unanimous decision, the Court held that the act was unconstitutional and that parents, not the state, had the authority to educate children as they thought best.<sup>[37]</sup>

Postwar social unrest was also related to the difficulties of absorbing the veterans from the war in the job market. Competition among groups for work heightened tensions. In the 1920s there was growing anti-Semitism in the United States related to economic competition and the fears of social change from decades of changed immigration, a lingering anti-German sentiment left over from World War I, and anti-black violence erupted in numerous locations as well. To combat the animus targeted at racial and religious minorities, including Catholics, the order formed a historical commission which published a series of books on their contributions, among other activities. The "Knights of Columbus Racial Contributions Series" of books included three titles: *The Gift of Black Folk*, by W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Jews in the Making of America* by George Cohen, and *The Germans in the Making of America* by Frederick

Schrader.<sup>[38]</sup>

## Recent history

Today, according to Massimo Faggioli, the Knights of Columbus are "'an extreme version' of a post-Vatican II phenomenon, the rise of discrete lay groups that have become centers of power themselves."<sup>[12]</sup> As the order and its charitable works grew, so did its prominence within the church.<sup>[39]</sup> The Supreme Board of Directors was invited to hold their April meeting at the Vatican in 1978, and the Board and their wives were received by Pope Paul VI.<sup>[39]</sup> Pope John Paul I's first audience with a layman was with Supreme Knight Dechant, and Pope John Paul II met with Dechant three days after his installation.<sup>[39]</sup>

John Paul traveled to the Dominican Republic and Mexico in 1978 and Dechant was invited to attend and welcome the Pope to the Americas.<sup>[39]</sup> During the pope's 1979 visit to the United States, the Supreme Officers and Board were the only lay organization to receive an audience.<sup>[40]</sup>

In 1997, the cause for McGivney's canonization was opened in the Archdiocese of Hartford. It was placed before the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in 2000. The Father Michael J. McGivney Guild was formed in 1997 to promote his cause, and it currently has more than 140,000 members.<sup>[41]</sup> Membership in the Knights of Columbus does not automatically make one a member of the guild, nor is membership restricted to Knights; members must elect to join. On March 15, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI approved a decree recognizing McGivney's "heroic virtue," significantly advancing the priest's process toward sainthood. McGivney may now be referred to as the "Venerable Servant of God." If the cause is successful, he would be the first priest born in the United States to be canonized as a saint.<sup>[42]</sup>

## 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 said to be a First-Degree Knight of Columbus; after participating in the subsequent degrees, each of which focuses on another virtue, he rises to that status. Upon reaching the Third Degree, a gentleman is 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, printed in 1885, contained only sections teaching unity and charity.<sup>[43]</sup> 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."<sup>[43]</sup> The third section, expounding fraternity, was officially adopted in 1891.<sup>[43]</sup>

## Fourth degree

After taking their third degree, knights are eligible to receive their fourth degree, the primary purpose of which is to foster the spirit of patriotism and to encourage active Catholic citizenship. Fourth degree members, in addition to being members of their individual councils, are also members of Fourth-Degree assemblies which typically comprise members of several councils. As of 2013, there were 3,109

assemblies worldwide.<sup>[44]</sup>

Fewer than 18% of Knights join the Fourth Degree, which is optional. Its members are referred to as "Sir Knight." Of a total 1,703,307 Knights in 2006, there were 292,289 Fourth Degree Knights.<sup>[9]</sup> This number increased to 335,132 in 2013.<sup>[44]</sup> A waiting period of one year from the time the third degree was taken was eliminated in 2013, and now any Third Degree Knight is eligible to join the Fourth Degree.<sup>[44]</sup>

A new Military Overseas Europe Special District was established in 2013 to oversee assemblies of military personnel serving on that continent.<sup>[44][45]</sup> Over 100 Department of Defense civilian employees and active-duty personnel based in Germany, Italy, and Britain took part in a special Fourth Degree Exemplification Ceremony at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany in 2013.<sup>[44][45]</sup> In that year exemplifications were also held in Camp Zama, Japan, and Yongsan Garrison in Seoul, Korea, where there are existing assemblies.<sup>[45]</sup>

Knights volunteer at 136 of the 153 Veteran's Affairs Medical Centers.<sup>[44]</sup>



Fourth Degree Emblem

## Color corps

Fourth Degree Knights may optionally purchase and wear the full regalia and join an 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.<sup>[46]</sup>

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.<sup>[47]</sup> Service baldrics include a scabbard for a sword and are worn over the coat while social baldrics are worn under the coat.<sup>[47]</sup>

On August 1, 2017, at the 135th annual Supreme Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson announced a new uniform of the Fourth Degree to include a blue blazer with the emblem as a patch and on the buttons, a white shirt, a Fourth Degree tie, dark gray slacks and a beret with the emblem.<sup>[48][nb 2]</sup>

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.<sup>[46]</sup>

## Charitable giving

Charity is the foremost principle of the Knights of Columbus. According to one commentator, "there is hardly a corner of the Catholic world where the resources of this international force have not left an impression."<sup>[12]</sup> This has allowed the Knights and its high-ranking officers to "become powerful and influential in ways unimaginable in 1882 ... and no other lay group can match the Knights' ability to leave its mark on the church."<sup>[12]</sup>

In 2015, the order gave more than \$175 million directly to charity and performed over 73.5 million man hours in volunteer service.<sup>[12]</sup> According to Independent Sector, this service has a value of more than \$1.7 billion. The total charitable contributions, from the past decade, ending December 31, 2015 rose to \$15 billion. Finally in 2015, Knights of Columbus, on an average per member basis, contributed 38 hours of community service.<sup>[51]</sup> Much of the financial effort went to initiatives of the Vatican and the US bishops.<sup>[12]</sup>

Year	US dollars donated	Volunteer hours donated
2012 <sup>[44]</sup>	\$167,549,817	70,113,207
2011 <sup>[44]</sup>	\$158,000,000	70,053,000
2010 <sup>[44]</sup>	\$155,000,000	70,049,000
2009 <sup>[44]</sup>	\$151,000,000	69,252,000
2008 <sup>[44]</sup>	\$150,000,000	68,784,000
1982 <sup>[49][nb 3]</sup>	\$41,700,000	10,400,000
1980 <sup>[50]</sup>	\$32,000,000	9,000,000

More than \$1.2 million was donated to Habitat for Humanity in 2013, in addition to 1.4 million volunteer hours.<sup>[44]</sup> Over 80,500 winter coats were distributed in 2012 to children in cold weather areas as well.<sup>[44]</sup> Since 2009, the order has spent \$38 million to install ultrasound machines in hospitals in poor communities and poor countries.<sup>[52]</sup> The very first ever national blood drive was sponsored by the order in 1938.<sup>[44]</sup> In 2013, council blood drives attracted more than 423,000 donors.<sup>[44]</sup>



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)(8) charitable organization.<sup>[53]</sup> 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.<sup>[54]</sup>

## Early efforts

During the mid 1890s, the United States was in the middle of a serious economic depression. The order was thriving, however, and at the 1897 convention Supreme Knight John J. Phelan spoke of the need to assist fellow knights who were in distress. The Supreme Council then adopted charitable funds within local councils "for the purposes of retaining their worthy members in good standing who are in need and in distress [and] who are absent from home."<sup>[55]</sup>

During the early 20th century, local councils often functioned as social welfare agencies.<sup>[56]</sup> Local councils, acting alone and sometimes joining forces, established unemployment bureaus to find jobs for men and women, members and non-members alike.<sup>[57]</sup> They "were also dedicated to education, to relief for the poor and sick, and to a variety of charitable causes."<sup>[58]</sup>

## Global Catholic donations

In 1979, each Knight was assessed a 50 cent per capita tax to establish a \$500,000 Luke E. Hart Memorial Fund for the "purposes of promoting increased devotion to Our Blessed Mother and for the preservation of the" Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in perpetuity.<sup>[59]</sup>

The multimillion-dollar Pacem in Terris Fund aids the Catholic Church's efforts for peace in the Middle East. A further \$20 million went to church facilities and \$7.4 million to Catholic schools from state and local councils.<sup>[44]</sup> Since 2014, the order raised more than \$17 million to help Christian refugees, with a focus on Iraq and Syria.<sup>[60]</sup>

## Vatican and bishops

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 Vox Clara Committee received \$100,000 in support of its efforts to translate liturgical texts.<sup>[12]</sup>

The Knights give to individual churches and diocese, but is also a major donor to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.<sup>[12][59]</sup> They have spent more than \$1.4 million between 2010 and 2014 to provide workshops for the bishops coordinated by the National Catholic Bioethics Center.<sup>[12]</sup> Since 1977, the order has provided funding to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.<sup>[59]</sup>



The order funded the first renovation of the façade of St. Peter's Basilica in over 350 years.<sup>[61]</sup>

## Vocations

In 2012, \$1.8 million was given by state and local councils to seminaries, with an additional \$5.9 million in direct assistance to seminarians.<sup>[44]</sup> 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.<sup>[62]</sup>

## Catholic education

The order funded a message from the Pope to the delegates of the 1979 National Catholic Education Association convention in which the pontiff stressed the importance of Catholic education.<sup>[59]</sup> The same year, the Supreme Board voted to fund the Conference's Advisory Committee on Public Policy and Catholic Schools.<sup>[59]</sup>

In 1979, the Supreme Board voted to fund the Conference's Advisory Committee on Public Policy and Catholic Schools.<sup>[59]</sup> In 1980, each member in the United States and Canada was assessed \$1.00 to raise \$1 million for the newly established Father Michael J. McGivney Memorial Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education.<sup>[63]</sup> The fund was designed to support the National Catholic Education Association's research efforts.<sup>[63]</sup> The association expressed their appreciation for this and other efforts to promote Catholic education by awarding the order the C. ALbert Koob Merit Award in 1981.<sup>[64]</sup>

## Catholic communications

### Satellite Uplink Program

Since the 1960s, 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 for the Millennial Jubilee, Pope John Paul II's visit to Nazareth, and several other events.<sup>[12][65][66]</sup> In missionary territories the order also pays for the satellite downlink.<sup>[12][65][66]</sup>



The Knights paid for the funeral of Pope Paul VI to be televised around the world.

The Satellite Uplink project was originally planned to telecast three papal events each year. However, the program expanded when, upon the death of Pope Paul VI, Bishop Andrew-Maria Deskur, president of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, telegraphed Supreme Knight Dechant asking if the order would pay to broadcast the funeral and following conclave and investiture of the next pope.<sup>[66]</sup> The same request was made shortly thereafter following the death of Pope John Paul I.<sup>[39]</sup> It is estimated that each telecast was seen by more than 800 million people.<sup>[39]</sup>

In recent years a contribution of \$100,000 was made to support the Holy See's strategic communications office.<sup>[12]</sup> It also purchased "a mobile unit with recording and transmitting equipment to enable Vatican television to broadcast in high definition."<sup>[12]</sup>

### Vatican Film Library and papal video coverage

In 1977, Deskur asked the order for funding for two additional projects, the Vatican Film Library and Radio Veritas, both of which were approved.<sup>[39]</sup> The film library was designed to collect all the known video footage of popes for use by journalists, scholars, and others.<sup>[39]</sup> This resulted in the creation of the Knights of Columbus Vatican Film Library at Saint Louis University.<sup>[39]</sup>

Following Pope John Paul II's trip to Mexico in 1978, the Knights produced an English-language video documenting the visit.<sup>[40]</sup> The following year the pontiff returned to Poland. Bishop Paul Marcinkus, President of the Institute for the Works of Religion, later told the order that raw footage of the trip existed, but there were no funds available to edit it into a usable format.<sup>[40]</sup> The Knights provided the money, and the videos were shown on Polish television and in movie theaters.<sup>[40]</sup> During his visit to the United States in October of the same year, the order once again provided funding to video record it at the request of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.<sup>[40]</sup>

### Catholic media

In 1977, Bishop Andrew-Maria Deskur, president of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, requested funding for Radio Veritas, a program to broadcast religious programming to the one-quarter of the world's population living behind the Bamboo Curtain in atheistic communist nations.<sup>[39]</sup>

The Knights are major sponsors of the Eternal Word Television Network, the Association for Catholic Information, the Catholic News Agency, and Cruz.<sup>[12]</sup> According to John L. Allen Jr., Cruz's editor, while the Knights sponsor a major portion of their budget, the order has no control over content.<sup>[12]</sup>

### The disabled

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,<sup>[9]</sup> with \$4.1 million donated in 2012 alone.<sup>[44]</sup>

One of the largest recipients of funds in this area is the Special Olympics.<sup>[44]</sup> In 2012, there were more than 107,000 Knights who donated 315,000 hours of service at nearly 20,000 Special Olympics events.<sup>[44]</sup> Individual councils donated \$3.7 million to the Special Olympics in 2013.<sup>[44]</sup> The order's support for the Special Olympics goes back to the very first games in 1968.<sup>[44]</sup>

In 2012, more than 5,000 wheelchairs were distributed in 10 countries in a partnership with the Global Wheelchair Mission.<sup>[44]</sup>

### Disaster relief

After a flood in Kansas in 1903, the order raised \$5,000 to be distributed to parishes and local councils, and it collected over \$100,000 after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.<sup>[67]</sup> In 1927, the order gave \$50,000 for flood relief.<sup>[68]</sup>

The Knights of Columbus also 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.<sup>[69]</sup> 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 \$2.5 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 from injuries sustained during the earthquake.<sup>[44][70]</sup> As of 2013, more than 800 children had already been aided by the program.<sup>[44]</sup>

After the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, a local council in Newtown, Connecticut, established a program asking people to pray a minimum of three Hail Marys for the victims and their families. Over 100,000 people pledged to say 3.25 million prayers.<sup>[44]</sup>

More than \$500,000 was donated to Hurricane Sandy relief efforts, and \$202,000 to victims of the April 2012 tornadoes in Oklahoma.<sup>[44]</sup> After West Fertilizer Company explosion in Texas, nearly a quarter of a million dollars were raised.<sup>[44]</sup> In total, more than \$3.3 million were donated by individual councils for disaster relief in 2012.<sup>[44]</sup>

## Insurance program

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### History

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.<sup>[19]</sup> 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.<sup>[20]</sup> 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<sup>[21]</sup>). If he remained sick after that, the council to which he belonged determined the sum of money given to him.<sup>[22]</sup>

The need for a reserve fund for times of epidemic was seen from the earliest days, but it was rejected several times before finally being established in 1892.<sup>[71]</sup> It had \$12,000 in assets in 1896.<sup>[72]</sup>

Since its first loan to St. Rose Church in Meriden, Connecticut, in the late 1890s, the Knights of Columbus have made loans to parishes, dioceses, and other Catholic institutions.<sup>[73]</sup> By 1954, over \$300 million had been loaned and the program "never lost one cent of principal or interest."<sup>[73]</sup>

In the post-World War II era, the interest rates on long-term bonds dipped below levels at which the order's insurance program could sustain itself, and Supreme Knight Hart moved the order into a more aggressive program of investing in real estate.<sup>[74]</sup> Under his leadership, the order established a lease-back investment program in which the order would buy a piece of property and then lease it back to the original owner "upon terms generally that would bring to our Order a net rental equal to the normal mortgage interest rate."<sup>[74]</sup>

Late in 1953 it was learned that the land upon which Yankee Stadium was built was for sale. On December 17, 1953, the order purchased the property for \$2.5 million and then leased it back for 28 years at \$182,000 a year with the option to renew the lease for three additional terms of 15 years at \$125,000 a year.<sup>[73]</sup> In 1971 the City of New York took the land by eminent domain.<sup>[75]</sup>

Between 1952 and 1962, 18 pieces of land were purchased as part of the lease-back program for a total of \$29 million. During this time, the amount of money invested in common stock also increased.<sup>[73]</sup>

### Modern program

The order offers a modern, professional insurance operation with more than \$100 billion of life insurance policies in force and \$19.8 billion in assets as of June 2013,<sup>[77]</sup> a figure more than double the 2000 levels.<sup>[44][77]</sup> Nearly 80,000 life certificates were issued in 2013, almost 30,000 more than the order's closest competitor, to bring the total to 1.73 million.<sup>[44]</sup> The program has a \$1.8 billion surplus.<sup>[44]</sup>



Over \$286 million in death benefits were paid in 2012 and \$1.7 billion were paid between 2000 and 2010.<sup>[44]</sup> This is large enough to rank 49th on the A. M. Best list of all life insurance companies in North America.<sup>[78]</sup> Since the founding of the order, \$3.5 billion in death benefits have been paid.<sup>[79]</sup> Premiums in 2012 were nearly \$1.2 billion, and dividends paid out totaled more than \$274 million.<sup>[44]</sup> Over the same time period, annuity deposits rose 4.2%, compared to an 8% loss for the industry as a whole.<sup>[44]</sup>

Year	Insurance in force (billions) <sup>[44]</sup>	Assets (billions) <sup>[44]</sup>
2012	\$88.4	\$19.4
2011	\$83.5	\$18.0
2010	\$79.0	\$16.9
2009	\$74.3	\$15.5
2008	\$70.1	\$14.1
1964 <sup>[76]</sup>	\$1+	

Every day in 2012 more than \$10 million was invested, for a total of \$2.7 billion on the year, and an annual income of \$905 million.<sup>[44]</sup> The order maintains a two-prong investment strategy: a company must first be a sound investment before stock in it is purchased, and secondly the company's activities must not conflict with Catholic social teaching.<sup>[44]</sup> Citing the awards they have won, the order calls themselves "champions of ethical investing."<sup>[12]</sup> The order also provides mortgages to churches and Catholic schools at "very competitive rates" through its ChurchLoan program.<sup>[44]</sup>

Products include permanent and term life insurance, as well as annuities, long term care insurance, and disability insurance.<sup>[77]</sup> 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.<sup>[80]</sup> According to the Fortune 1000 list, the Knights of Columbus ranked 880 in total revenue in 2017<sup>[81]</sup> and, with more than 1,500 agents, was 925th in size in 2015.<sup>[44]</sup> All agents are members of the order.<sup>[82]</sup>

The order's insurance program is the most highly rated program in North America.<sup>[44]</sup> For 40 consecutive years, the order has received A. M. Best's highest rating, A++.<sup>[44][83]</sup> Additionally, the order is certified by the Insurance Marketplace Standards Association for ethical sales practices.<sup>[9]</sup> 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+.<sup>[84][85][nb 4]</sup> Additionally, the insurance program has a low 3.5% lapse rate of the 1.9 million members and their families who are insured.<sup>[44][77]</sup>

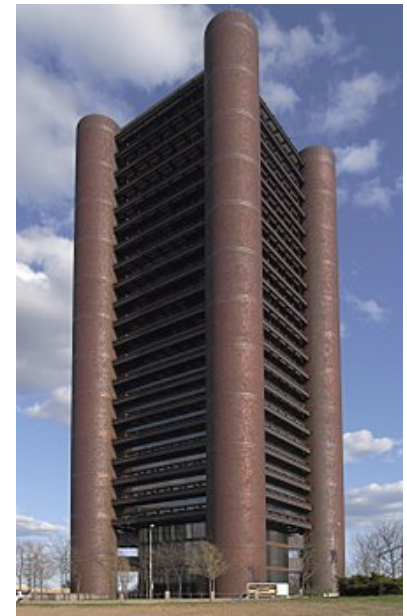
## Organization

As of 2015 there were 1,918,122 knights, and membership has grown each year for 44 consecutive years. Each member belongs to one of 15,342 councils around the world. In addition, there is a "round table"<sup>[nb 5]</sup> presence in Lithuania.<sup>[44]</sup> Membership is limited to men who are 18 years of age or older and are practicing Catholics, i.e. "an applicant or member accepts the teaching authority of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, aspires to live in accord with the precepts of the Catholic Church, and is in good standing in the Catholic Church."<sup>[5]</sup>

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.<sup>[89]</sup>

Year	Membership	Councils
2013 <sup>[44]</sup>	1,843,587	14,606
2012 <sup>[44]</sup>	1,830,000	14,400
2011 <sup>[44]</sup>	1,820,000	14,200
2010 <sup>[44]</sup>	1,810,000	14,000
2009 <sup>[44]</sup>	1,790,000	13,700
1982 <sup>[86]</sup>	1,300,000	<7,000
1964 <sup>[76]</sup>	1,000,000+	
1938 <sup>[87]</sup>	500,000	
1931 <sup>[68]</sup>		2,600
1914 <sup>[88]</sup>	300,000+	
1899 <sup>[88]</sup>	40,267	
1897 <sup>[55]</sup>	16,651	195
1886 <sup>[55]</sup>	2,700	27

Council	Assembly	Circle
Grand Knight	Navigator	Chief Squire
Chaplain*	Friar*	Father Prior
Deputy Grand Knight	Captain	Deputy Chief Squire
Chancellor	Admiral	Marshal 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	Marshal 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>



Knights of Columbus headquarters

(\*Appointed annually by each council's Grand Knight or assembly's Navigator)

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

## Supreme Council

The Supreme Council is the governing body of the order and is composed of elected representatives from each jurisdiction. The Supreme Council comprises<sup>[90]</sup>

- The State Deputy and the last living Past State Deputy of each State Council.<sup>[nb 6]</sup>
- The Territorial Deputy of each district not under the jurisdiction of a State Council.<sup>[nb 7]</sup>
- Past Supreme Knights of the order.
- Supreme Officers ex officio during their terms of office.
- Members of the Board of Directors other than the Supreme Officers.
- One representative from each State Council for the first two thousand insurance members, and one representative for the first two thousand associate members, and one representative for each additional two thousand insurance members or major part thereof and one representative for each additional two thousand associate members or major part thereof.<sup>[nb 8]</sup>


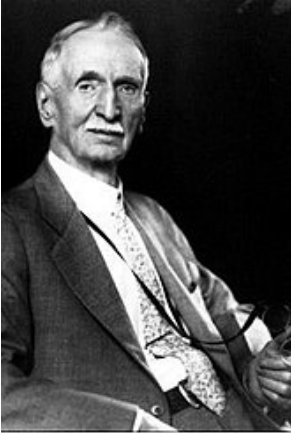


## Board and officers





In a manner similar to shareholders at an annual meeting, the Supreme Council elects insurance members to serve three year terms on the Supreme Board of Directors. The 24 elected members, plus the Supreme Chaplain and Past Supreme Knights who constitute the Board, appoint a Supreme Chaplain and a Supreme Warden. They then choose from their own number the other senior operating officials of the order, including the Supreme Knight and Deputy Supreme Knight, a Supreme Secretary, a Supreme Treasurer, a Supreme Advocate, and a Supreme Physician, each of whom serves a one-year term.<sup>[90][91]</sup> The Board must meet at least quarterly.<sup>[90]</sup>

Directors, other than Supreme Officers or Assistant Supreme Officers, are limited to serving three years.<sup>[92]</sup> Supreme Officers and Assistant Supreme Officers, other than the Supreme Chaplain, have a mandatory retirement age of 70.<sup>[92]</sup>


<b>Supreme Knight</b>	<b>Supreme Chaplain</b>
<b><u>Carl A. Anderson</u></b>	<b><u>Archbishop William E. Lori</u></b>
<b><u>Deputy Supreme Knight</u></b>	<b><u>Patrick E. Kelly</u></b>
<b>Supreme Secretary</b>	<b>Michael O'Connor</b>
<b>Supreme Treasurer</b>	<b>Ronald Schwarz</b>
<b>Supreme Advocate</b>	<b>John Marrella</b>
<b>Supreme Warden</b>	<b>Francis Drouhard</b>
<b>Supreme Master</b>	<b>Dennis Stoddard</b>

## Supreme Knights

Term of office		Supreme Knight		Prior office	Deputy Supreme Knight		Supreme Chaplain	
1	February 2, 1882 to May 17, 1886		<u>James T. Mullen</u>			John Dowling <sup>[93]</sup>	1882 to 1890	<u>Michael J. McGivney</u>
2	1886 to 1897		<u>John J. Phelan</u>		June 15, 1884 to	<u>William Hassett</u> <sup>[94]</sup>		
3	March 2, 1897 to February 8, 1898		<u>James E. Hayes</u>	First State Deputy of Massachusetts	1897 to February 8, 1898	<u>John J. Cone</u> <sup>[95]</sup>		
4	February 8, 1898 to 1899		<u>John J. Cone</u>	First New Jersey State Deputy, Deputy Supreme Knight		<i>Served remainder of Hayes term.</i>		
5	April 1, 1899 to		<u>Edward L. Hearn</u>	State Deputy of Massachusetts	April 1, 1899 <sup>[96]</sup> to June	<u>John W. Hogan</u>	1890 to 1928 <sup>[98]</sup>	<u>Patrick McGivney</u>

	August 31, 1909				3, 1903 <sup>[97]</sup>			
					June 3, 1903 <sup>[97]</sup> to	<u>Patrick T. McArdle</u> <sup>[99]</sup>		
						<u>James A. Flaherty</u> <sup>[100]</sup>		
6	September 1, 1909 to August 31, 1927		<u>James A. Flaherty</u>	Deputy Supreme Knight	1909 <sup>[98]</sup> to 1927 <sup>[101]</sup>	<u>Martin H. Carmody</u> <sup>[98]</sup>		
7	September 1, 1927 to August 31, 1939		<u>Martin H. Carmody</u>	Deputy Supreme Knight, Michigan State Deputy	1927 <sup>[98]</sup> to 1933 <sup>[102]</sup>	<u>John F. Martin</u>	1928 <sup>[98]</sup> to 1938 <sup>[103]</sup>	<u>John J. McGivney</u>
					1933 <sup>[102]</sup> to 1939	<u>Francis P. Matthews</u>		
8	1939 to 1945		<u>Francis P. Matthews</u>	Deputy Supreme Knight <sup>[103]</sup>	1939 to 1945	<u>John E. Swift</u>	1938 <sup>[103]</sup> to 1960 <sup>[104]</sup>	<u>Leo M. Finn</u>
9	1945 to 1953		<u>John E. Swift</u>	Deputy Supreme Knight <sup>[105]</sup> Massachusetts State Deputy <sup>[106]</sup>	1945 <sup>[107]</sup> to 1949 <sup>[108]</sup>	<u>Timothy Galvin</u>		
					1949 <sup>[108]</sup> to 1960 <sup>[109]</sup>	<u>William J. Mulligan</u>		
10	September 1, 1953 to February 19, 1964		<u>Luke E. Hart</u>	Supreme Advocate	1960 <sup>[109]</sup> to 1964 <sup>[110]</sup>	<u>John W. McDevitt</u> <sup>[110]</sup>	1961 to 1987	<u>Charles Pasquale Greco</u> <sup>[111][104]</sup>
11	1964 to 1977		<u>John W. McDevitt</u>	Deputy Supreme Knight	1964 to 1966	<u>John H. Griffin</u> <sup>[110][112]</sup>		



					1966 <sup>[113]</sup> to April 1976 <sup>[114]</sup>	<u>Charles J. Ducey</u>							
12	January 21, 1977 to September 30, 2000		<u>Virgil C. Dechant</u>	Supreme Secretary, Supreme Master	1976 to 1978	<u>Ernest J. Wolff</u> <sup>[114]</sup>							
					1978 <sup>[114]</sup> to	<u>Frederick H. Pelletier</u> <sup>[115]</sup>							
					1984 to 1997	<u>Ellis Flynn</u> <sup>[116]</sup>							
										1997 to 2000	<u>Robert F. Wade</u> <sup>[118]</sup>	1987 to 2005	<u>Thomas V. Daily</u> <sup>[117]</sup>
										2000 to 2006	<u>Jean Migneault</u> <sup>[119]</sup>		
					2006 to 2013	<u>Dennis Savoie</u> <sup>[121][122]</sup>							
					2013 to 2017	<u>Logan T. Ludwig</u> <sup>[123]</sup>							
13	October 1, 2000 to present		<u>Carl A. Anderson</u>	Supreme Secretary, Vice President for Public Policy			2005 to present	<u>William Lori</u> <sup>[120]</sup>					
					January 1, 2017 to present	<u>Patrick E. Kelly</u> <sup>[123]</sup>							

### Supreme Convention

The Knights of Columbus invites the head of state of every country in which they operate to the annual Supreme Convention.<sup>[124]</sup> In 1971, US President Richard Nixon gave the keynote address at the States Dinner; Secretary of Transportation and Knight John Volpe had arranged this first appearance of a US President at a Supreme Council gathering.<sup>[125]</sup>

President Ronald Reagan spoke at the Centennial Convention in 1982.<sup>[126]</sup> Reagan presented the order with a President's Volunteer Action Award at the White House in 1984.<sup>[127]</sup> 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.<sup>[128]</sup> President Barack Obama has also sent written messages during his term in office.<sup>[129]</sup>



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

### Assemblies

Fourth degree members belong to one of 3,109 assemblies, including 75 created in 2012.<sup>[44]</sup> The first assembly in Europe was established in 2012,<sup>[44]</sup> and in 2013 a new assembly for Boston-area college councils was created at Harvard University.<sup>[130]</sup> As of 2013 there were 335,132 Fourth Degree members, including 15,709 who joined the ranks of the Patriotic Degree the year before.<sup>[44]</sup>

## College councils

The college councils program started with the chartering of Notre Dame Council #1477 in 1910,<sup>[131]</sup> drawn from student members of the local Santa Maria Council 553.<sup>[132]</sup> Keane Council #353 had previously been chartered at The Catholic University of America in 1898, though it consisted mostly of faculty and staff of the university and neighborhood; it later moved off campus.<sup>[133][nb 9]</sup> These were followed by councils at Saint Louis University and Benedictine College.<sup>[135]</sup> In 1919, Mount St. Mary's College and Seminary Council 1965 became the first council attached to a college and seminary, at what is now Mount St. Mary's University.<sup>[136][137]</sup>

In each autumn since 1966, the Supreme Council has hosted a College Council Conference at their headquarters in New Haven, Connecticut.<sup>[138][139]</sup> 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 most recent winner of the Outstanding College Council Award was The Catholic University of America Council.<sup>[140]</sup>

## Promotion of the Catholic faith

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### Anti-religious discrimination efforts

Since its earliest days, the Knights of Columbus has been a "Catholic anti-defamation society."<sup>[142]</sup> In 1914, it established a Commission on Religious Prejudices.<sup>[142]</sup> The Commission conducted research to discover the sources of religious discrimination, conducted an education campaign to correct editors and journalists who published bigoted statements, and supported the Department of Justice in criminal libel prosecution.<sup>[143]</sup> They also called on the Postmaster General to ban such publications.<sup>[144]</sup> They recruited Protestant clergy to the cause, and had success in changing the tone of coverage in places such as the Associated Press.<sup>[144]</sup>

As part of the effort, the order distributed pamphlets, and lecturers toured the country speaking on how Catholics could love and be loyal to America.<sup>[145]</sup> Copies of the Commission's 1915 report were sent to the 25 most prominent citizens in every local council's community, as determined by the local council.<sup>[145]</sup> By 1917, the number of anti-Catholic publications in the country dropped from 60 to only two or three.<sup>[146]</sup> The Commission also noted the decline of bigotry in both elections and bills filed in state legislatures.<sup>[146]</sup>

### Chair of American history

On March 7, 1899, Phillip Garrigan, Vice Rector of The Catholic University of America, addressed the National Council, as the Supreme Convention was then called, asking for establishment of a Knights of Columbus Chair of American History at the University, to counter the somewhat anti-Catholic bias of history-writing at the time.<sup>[133]</sup> The convention enthusiastically accepted the proposal. By March 5, 1901, Supreme Knight Edward L. Hearn reported unhappily to the national convention that only \$10,000 has been collected of the \$50,000 commitment made two years earlier. It would take an additional three years to collect the total amount.

Over 10,000 Knights were on hand on April 13, 1904, to present a \$55,633.79 check<sup>[147]</sup> (\$1,399,831.80 in 2012 dollars<sup>[148]</sup>) to endow the Knights of Columbus Chair of American History Cardinal James Gibbons, Chancellor of the University and a strong supporter of the Knights. The outdoor ceremony was held on the steps of the University's McMahon Hall.<sup>[133]</sup> The gigantic check was ten feet high and four feet wide, and was beautifully executed on vellum



Knights of Columbus in Utah USA holding 8 relics associated with the Passion of Jesus including 1. True Cross 2. stone from Last Supper Table/Room 3. piece of the Scourging Pillar 4. part of the Crown of Thorns 5. picture of Veil of Veronica touched to the original 6, Holy Nail replica with metal filings from the original nails 7. bone piece from St. Longinus who used the Holy Lance to pierce the heart of Jesus 8. Thread of the cloth bag that held the burial cloth known as the Shroud of Turin.<sup>[141]</sup>



The Knights of Columbus presented a check to The Catholic University of America on the steps of the University's McMahon Hall in 1904 to establish a Chair of American History.

in the style of an illuminated manuscript.<sup>[133]</sup> The check represented "the Order's first response to a call from the American Church," which demonstrates to any doubters, and the early Knights did encounter opposition within the church, that the order was thoroughly Catholic.<sup>[149]</sup>

## Evangelization

Since its founding, the Knights of Columbus has been involved in evangelization. The creation of the 4th Degree, with its emphasis on patriotism, performing a valuable anti-defamation function as well as asserting claims to Americanism.<sup>[150]</sup> In response to a defamatory "bogus oath" circulated by the KKK, in 1914 the Knights set up a framework for a lecture series and educational programs to combat anti-Catholic sentiment. It was with this experience in setting up educational programs that they were able to run education and occupational skills training for veterans returning from World War I.

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. This was "in response to blatant anti-Catholic bias in other religious media in order to educate non-Catholics about the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church."<sup>[151]</sup>

## Awards

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The order sponsors a number of international awards. The first, the *Gaudium et Spes Award*, is named after the document from the Second Vatican Council, and is the highest honor bestowed by the order. It "is awarded only in special circumstances and only to individuals of exceptional merit" and comes an honorarium of \$100,000.<sup>[152]</sup> Since its institution in 1992, it has only been awarded twelve times.<sup>[152]</sup> The award "recognizes individuals for their exemplary contributions to the realization of the message of faith and service in the spirit of Christ as articulated in the document for which it is named."<sup>[153]</sup>

The second international award, also only given "when merited," is the *Caritas Award*. Named for the theological virtue alternatively translated as either charity or love, it recognizes "extraordinary works of charity and service." It has been awarded five times since its establishment in 2013.<sup>[154]</sup> The *Saint Michael Award* was established in conjunction with the Caritas Award to recognize members of the order who have exemplified a lifetime of service on behalf of the Knights of Columbus.<sup>[154]</sup>

Additionally, at its annual convention each year, the order recognizes other individuals and councils with awards. These include the Family of the Year award, and prizes for the best activities in the categories of church, community, council, culture of life, family, and youth. Additionally, top selling general and field insurance agents are recognized, as are top recruiting individuals and councils.<sup>[154]</sup>

The order established the Grand Cross of the Knights of Columbus, but awarded it only to Cristobal Colón y de La Cerda, Duke of Veragua and descendant of Columbus, when he visited the US in 1893.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Political activity

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While the Knights were active politically from an early date, in the years following the Second Vatican Council, as the "Catholic anti-defamation character" of the order began to diminish as Catholics became more accepted, the leadership "attempted to stimulate the membership to a greater awareness of the religious and moral issues confronting the Church."<sup>[12]</sup> That led to the creation of a "variety of new programs reflecting the proliferation of the new social ministries of the church."<sup>[28][12]</sup>

The leadership of the order has been, at times, both liberal and conservative. Martin H. Carmody and Luke E. Hart were both political conservatives, but John J. Phelan was a Democratic politician prior to becoming Supreme Knight,<sup>[155]</sup> John Swift's "strong support for economic democracy and social-welfare legislation marks him as a fairly representative New Deal anti-communist,"<sup>[156]</sup> and Francis P. Matthews was a civil rights official and member of Harry Truman's cabinet. The current Supreme Knight, Carl A. Anderson, previously served in Ronald Reagan's White House.

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.<sup>[157]</sup> Public policy activity is limited to issue-specific campaigns, typically dealing with Catholic family and life issues. They state that

In addition to performing charitable works, the Knights of Columbus encourages its members to meet their responsibilities as Catholic citizens and to become active in the political life of their local communities, to vote and to speak out on the public issues of the day. ... In the political realm, this means opening our public policy efforts and deliberations to the life of Christ and the teachings of the Church. In accord with our Bishops, the Knights of Columbus has consistently maintained positions that take these concerns into account. The order supports and promotes the social doctrine of the Church, including a robust vision of religious liberty that embraces religion's proper role in the private and public spheres.<sup>[158]</sup>

The order opposed persecution of Catholics in Mexico during the Cristero War, and later proposed a framework for a lasting peace after World War II based on Catholic philosophy. The Knights have also adopted resolutions opposing communism,<sup>[159]</sup> advocating a culture of life,<sup>[nb 10][160]</sup> defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman,<sup>[161]</sup> in defense of religious liberty,<sup>[162]</sup> and promoting faithful citizenship.<sup>[163]</sup> The Knights have been active opponents against the legal introduction of same-sex marriage and have been a key contributor in terms of funding to local measures.<sup>[164]</sup>

As part of their efforts to build a culture of life, Supreme Conventions have adopted resolutions prohibiting people "who do not support the legal protection of unborn children, or who advocate the legalization of assisted suicide or euthanasia" from attending Knights of Columbus events or bestowing honors upon them.<sup>[165]</sup>

During the 20th century, the order established the Commission on Religious Prejudices, and the Knights of Columbus Historical Commission which combated racism.<sup>[166]</sup> It was also supportive of trade unionism, and published the works "of the broad array of intellectuals," including George Schuster, Samuel Flagg Bemis, Allan Nevins, and W. E. B. DuBois.<sup>[166]</sup> During the Cold War, the order had a history of anti-socialist, anti-communist crusades.<sup>[167]</sup> "If the Knights displayed a conservative tenor, it was not political conservatism but rather cultural conservatism."<sup>[156]</sup>

## Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors

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In 2015, the order launched Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, a money management firm that invests money in accordance with Catholic social teaching.<sup>[14]</sup> The firm uses the Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to guide their investment decisions.<sup>[14]</sup> The guidelines include protecting human life, promoting human dignity, reducing arms production, pursuing economic justice, protecting the environment, and encouraging corporate responsibility.<sup>[nb 11]</sup> The goal, according to Anthony V. Minopoli, chief investment officer of the Knights of Columbus and president and chief investment officer of Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors, is to "partner with Catholic investors and provide them with what we've been providing Knights of Columbus for years."<sup>[14]</sup>

The firm began with \$21.4 billion in assets under management, all of which came from the Knights of Columbus.<sup>[14]</sup> Their initial goal was to capture 2.5% to 3% of the \$150 billion Catholic market in the first three to five years.<sup>[14]</sup> They began with six mutual funds, two made up of bonds and four of stocks, with a \$200 million total investment from the Knights of Columbus.<sup>[14]</sup> The funds (limited-duration bond and core bond, and large-cap growth, large-cap value, small-cap core, and international equity) are targeted towards institutional investors, but individuals can also invest if they meet the minimum amount invested.<sup>[14][169]</sup>

In addition to the wholly owned subsidiary, it also purchased 20% of Boston Advisors, a boutique investment management firm, managing assets for institutional and high-net-worth investors.<sup>[14]</sup> Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors manages the fixed-income strategies for their funds while Boston Advisors subadvises on the equity strategies.<sup>[14]</sup> Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors also offers model portfolio, outsourced CIO services, a bank loan strategy, and other alternative investment strategies.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Notable Knights

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Many notable 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;<sup>[171]</sup> Al Smith;<sup>[172]</sup> Sargent Shriver;<sup>[173]</sup> Samuel Alito; John Boehner;<sup>[174]</sup> Ray Flynn;<sup>[175]</sup> Jeb Bush;<sup>[176]</sup> and Sergeant Major Daniel Daly,<sup>[177]</sup> a two-time Medal of Honor recipient.<sup>[178]</sup>

Many notable clerics are also Knights, including Cardinal William 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;<sup>[179]</sup> wrestler Lou Albano;<sup>[180]</sup> James Connolly, the first Olympic gold-medal

champion in modern times;<sup>[181]</sup> Floyd Patterson, former heavyweight boxing champion;<sup>[182]</sup> and baseball legend Babe Ruth<sup>[183]</sup> 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, known as the Mexican martyrs who were killed during the repression following the 1920s revolution, were declared saints by Pope John Paul II.<sup>[184]</sup>

## Emblems of the order

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### 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. The emblem consists of a shield mounted on a Formée cross, which is an artistic representation of the cross of Christ. This represents the Catholic identity of the order.<sup>[185]</sup>

Mounted on the shield are three objects: a fasces; an anchor; and a dagger. In ancient Rome, the fasces 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."<sup>[185]</sup> The anchor represents Christopher Columbus, patron of the order. The short sword, or dagger, was a weapon used by medieval knights. The shield as a whole, with the letters "K of C," represents "Catholic Knighthood in organized merciful action."<sup>[185]</sup>

### 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."<sup>[185]</sup> The red, white, and blue are taken from the American flag and represent patriotism, the basic principle of the Fourth Degree. Styled with the continents of the western hemisphere in white, the blue globe represents God the Father. A red Isabella cross, for the queen who sponsored Columbus, serves as a symbol of God the Son. The white dove is a symbol of peace and God the Holy Spirit. Columbus' name in Italian (*Colombo*) also means "dove."<sup>[185]</sup>



Fourth Degree emblem

### Columbian Squires emblem

The emblem of the Squires symbolizes the ideals which identify a squire. On the arms of a Maltese cross are the letters "P," which represents the physical development necessary to make the body as strong as the spirit; "I," which stands for the intellectual development needed for cultural and mental maturity; "S," which represents the spiritual growth and practice of our faith; and "C," which stands for the development of citizenship and civic life. The larger letters: "C," representing Christ and also Christopher Columbus; "S," the Squires; and "K," the Knights of Columbus, by whom the Squires program is sponsored, are intertwined in the center of the cross. They are the three foundations of the program.

The Latin motto, "Esto Dignus," encircles the emblem. Translated into English, it means "Be Worthy."

## Auxiliary groups

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### Women's auxiliaries

Many councils also have women's auxiliaries.<sup>[186]</sup> At the turn of the 20th century two were formed by local councils and each took the name the Daughters of Isabella.<sup>[187][188]</sup> 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.<sup>[189][190]</sup> Other groups are known as the Columbiettes.<sup>[187]</sup> In the Philippines, the ladies' auxiliary is known as the Daughters of Mary Immaculate.<sup>[191]</sup>



President John F. Kennedy was a Fourth Degree member of Bunker Hill Council No. 62.<sup>[170]</sup>



A proposal in 1896 to establish councils for women did not pass, and was never proposed again.<sup>[72]</sup>

## Columbian Squires

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.<sup>[192]</sup> According to the Christian Brother Barnabas McDonald, the Squires' founder: "The supreme purpose of the Columbian Squires is character building."<sup>[89]</sup>

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.<sup>[193]</sup> When Squires process in a color guard, they wear blue capes, similar to those worn by members of the Fourth Degree, and black berets.<sup>[194]</sup>

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.<sup>[89]</sup> Circles are either council based, parish based, or school based, depending on the location of the circle and the Knight counselors.<sup>[89]</sup>

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

## Squire Roses

The Squire Roses are a youth sorority run by individual state councils for Catholic girls between the ages of 10 and 19. Founded by Russell DeRose and the Virginia State Council of the Knights of Columbus in 1996, the Roses are a sister organization to the Squires.<sup>[195]</sup>

## Similar organizations

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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 Marshall in Ghana, the Knights of Da Gama in South Africa, and the Knights of Saint Mulumba in Nigeria.<sup>[196]</sup> The Loyal Orange Institution, also known as the Orange Order, is a similar organization for Protestant Christians.<sup>[197]</sup>

## See also

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- History of the Knights of Columbus and The Catholic University of America
- Columbus Fountain
- Columbus School of Law
- Father Millet Cross
- James Cardinal Gibbons Memorial Statue
- The Knight on the Grid
- Knights of Columbus Hostel fire
- List of Knights of Columbus buildings
- Manuscripta*
- Parish Priest* (book)
- Pope John Paul II Cultural Center
- St. Mary's Church (New Haven, Connecticut)

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### Notes

- According to the Knights, a "practical" Catholic endorses Church teachings and tries to live up them in their personal lives.<sup>[5]</sup>

2. With the previous uniform, the Supreme Master wore a dark blue cape and chapeau, a vice supreme master wore a light blue cape and chapeau, a master wore a gold cape and chapeau, a district marshal wore a green cape and chapeau, a faithful navigator wore a white cape and chapeau, an assembly commander wore a purple cape and chapeau, and color corps members wore red capes and white chapeaus.
3. The totals for the previous 12 years were \$238 million donated and 65 million hours of service.<sup>[49]</sup>
4. Other US insurance groups also downgraded by S&P from AAA to AA+ were New York Life, Northwestern Mutual, TIAA, and USAA as, like the Knights of Columbus, their assets are highly concentrated in the US and they have significant holdings in US Treasury and agency securities.
5. The Round Table Program was designed to help every parish to have a Knights of Columbus presence in parishes that are not able to support a full council.
6. The incorporators named in the Charter are also technically members of the Supreme Council, though all have been dead for decades.
7. Additionally, the last living former Deputy of Luzon, Mindanao, and Visayas who is actually residing in the jurisdiction.
8. More fully, "One representative from each State Council for the first two thousand insurance members, and one representative for the first two thousand associate members, and one representative for each additional two thousand insurance members or major part thereof and one representative for each additional two thousand associate members or major part thereof represented in said State Council as shall appear from the records of the Supreme Secretary. However, any state council having an insurance membership of more than 50% of its total membership will be given credit for any excess insurance members over the minimum number necessary to achieve its last insurance delegate. This excess amount of insurance membership will then be applied toward an additional associate member delegate pursuant to the requirements of this section. But no State Council shall be entitled to more than eight elected representatives to the Supreme Council."
9. On June 5, 1898, Keane Council #353, was instituted with 66 charter members, and Lawrence O. Murray, Comptroller of the Currency, as Grand Knight. It "formed its nucleus in the Catholic University," in the words of Philip Garrigan, one of Keane's founders and vice-rector of the University.<sup>[134]</sup> It was named for Irish-born Bishop John J. Keane, first rector of the University (1889–1896), and later Archbishop of Dubuque, Iowa. First meetings are in the Typographical Temple, then move to Grand Army Hall on October 12, 1898, then to the Maccabee Temple the following June.
10. For more on this see, for example, Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium vitae* where he discusses issues pertaining to the sanctity of human life, including murder, abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment, and more.
11. The full guidelines are published on the Bishops Conference's website.<sup>[168]</sup>

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## External links

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- [Official website \(http://www.kofc.org/\)](http://www.kofc.org/)
- [Father Michael J. McGivney Guild \(http://www.fathermcgivney.org/\)](http://www.fathermcgivney.org/)

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