



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR LIFE

Worthy Grand Knight:

During the World Meeting of Families, Pope Francis called for a new alliance between the Church and the family. “May God grant us this gift of a renewed closeness between the family and the Church,” the pope said. “Families need it, the Church needs it, and we pastors need it.”

Today, the Knights of Columbus is positioned to play a key role in this new alliance. To meet this call from our Holy Father requires that we adopt new methods and that our councils become even more active and integrated within our parish communities.

In light of this, I announced at the mid-year meeting of State Deputies in San Antonio an Order-wide initiative to strengthen both our parishes and our families. It is entitled: *Building the Domestic Church While Strengthening Our Parish*. The details of this initiative were also shared at the recently concluded jurisdiction mid-year meetings.

Highlights of the new initiative include:

- Collaborating with our pastors to promote greater incorporation of our councils into the life of our parishes.
- Accelerating our movement towards parish-based councils and away from the home association buildings
- A commitment to providing authentic and robust Catholic Scouting experience through parish-based troops.
- Support for parish-based youth ministry efforts and full integration of Knights of Columbus youth activities, including active Squires circles, into the parish mission and pastoral strategy.

Throughout the next year we will continue to incorporate new and existing programs into this initiative. The full text of my address on the initiative is the content of my December column in *Columbia*, which continues to be available online at kofc.org. A video of the speech is also available for you to show to council leaders.

The Supreme Council will be hosting a webinar on Saturday, February 20th at 2:00 p.m. EST. More information on the webinar and a full invitation will be sent out from our Fraternal Training department. I invite you to attend this training session so that you can become more familiar with the new initiative’s goals and objectives for our Order.

It is my expectation that you and your council officers meet with your district deputy to discuss how the *Building the Domestic Church* initiative will impact and influence your council activities in the coming months and years. Additionally, I am asking that each grand knight meet with his pastor to determine how his council can more fully serve the men and families of our parishes.

Enclosed you will find an FAQ sheet for your reference as well as a one page agenda/talking points for meeting with your pastor. Further questions should be directed to Corporate Communications through Knightline@kofc.org or (203) 752-4264.

As I told the state deputies at their meeting in November, the “content” of the Knights of Columbus has not changed. We are a Catholic brotherhood based upon the principles of charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism. We are dedicated to faithful and unparalleled service to the Church. What will change is the “expression” of that service so that our work may become even more relevant and effective. The history of our Order has proven that the closer the Knights of Columbus

becomes to parish life; the closer we work with our parish priests; and the more we support Catholic families, the more our Order has grown in membership and charity.

The challenge of effective leadership is to lead change, not to be led by change. The leadership of the Knights of Columbus has always succeeded in leading change. And this is what I am confident you will succeed in doing in the days ahead.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl A. Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "C".

Carl A. Anderson
Supreme Knight

Enclosures

Building the Domestic Church While Strengthening Our Parishes

Frequently Asked Questions

Please note: *These questions and answers are not a comprehensive guide to the program. In-depth support materials and guides will be made available to all grand knights and state deputies. Should you have additional questions, please direct them to the Corporate Communications Department by emailing knightline@kofc.org or calling 203-752-4264.*

What is the Building the Domestic Church initiative?

This initiative refers to activities focused on promoting the new evangelization, strengthening our parishes and growing the Order. It is designed to help our members and their families reflect the holiness of the universal Church. In promoting each family as a domestic church, the Knights of Columbus primarily seeks to integrate our members and their families more fully into the sacramental and social life of the parish.

Why is the initiative being promoted by the Supreme Council at this time?

The Knights of Columbus has always been an organization dedicated to the well-being of the family. By building upon our programs and encouraging councils to more fully integrate with the sacramental and social life of their parish, we hope to strengthen our members' families, revitalize our parishes and grow our Order.

Will the initiative change our councils?

The Domestic Church initiative was not designed to change councils; it was designed to help councils refocus on the Order's mission to strengthen families and revitalize parish communities.

To do this, the council must prioritize family activities and support the needs of pastor. Knights should keep the pastor informed about all the resources their council can offer.

What will be the Knights of Columbus' relationship with the Boy Scouts of America and other international Scouting programs?

Consistent with the goal of the Domestic Church initiative, troops must be chartered by the local parish rather than by a council. Knights are strongly encouraged to aid the parish-chartered organization through continued volunteer service, leadership and financial support.

If a council sponsors a Boy Scout troop, what steps does it need to take?

As a preliminary matter, grand knights should meet with their pastors to discern whether Catholic Scouting could fit into the parish's youth ministry. If so, the grand knight will need to coordinate with troop leadership and the local Scouting Council to designate the parish as the chartered organization for the troop. Once this change has been made, the council should continue to provide volunteer leadership and financial support for the troop.

What do these changes mean for active Squires circles?

If a council has an active Squires circle, the grand knight and Squires counselor should meet with the pastor to discuss how the Squires circle may be more fully integrated into the parish's existing youth ministry. Active Squires circles may continue serving and recruiting boys according to current practice. The Supreme Council will continue to provide support materials to the circles.

How should councils begin engaging in parish youth ministry?

Grand knights should meet with their pastors to discuss the role that council members and their families can have in supporting parish-based youth ministry programs and activities. These can also incorporate Knights of Columbus youth programs, such as the Free Throw Championship and the

Soccer Challenge. Youth Activity chairmen should act as a liaison with the parish youth ministry team in order to determine how the council can best support parish youth activities.

Will the Supreme Council provide any resources for youth activities or ministry?

The Supreme Council will continue to provide resources through its various existing youth activities. Additionally, more materials relating to faith formation will become available as the Supreme Council continues to expand the Domestic Church program in the months ahead.

Is there a date set at which circles are to cease operations?

At this point, no. The Supreme Council will continue to monitor and evaluate the program over the course of the next year. However, councils are not encouraged to form new circles, and inactive circles should be disbanded.

Should currently active circles continue to recruit new members?

Yes, with the understanding that the program may evolve to meet the needs of the parish's youth ministry.

Will the Squires Advancement program still be supported?

The Supreme Council will continue to support the Squires Advancement program and provide other resources that are currently supplied to active circles.

Will the Supreme Council accept applications for new circles?

If a council has met all the requirements, the Supreme Council will authorize the formation of a new circle. However, as stated above, new circles are not encouraged and existing circles may eventually be integrated into parish youth ministry.

Why is the Knights of Columbus moving away from home corporation-based councils and toward parish-based councils?

To help Catholic men become better husbands, fathers, sons and grandfathers, and to strengthen Christian family and parish life in keeping with Father McGivney's original vision for the Knights of Columbus.

When is it time for a council to move into a parish?

1. When the majority of a council's time, resources and focus are devoted to the home corporation's problems and concerns
2. When a home corporation's expenses are so burdensome that it is forced to charge the council and its members an exorbitant rent or other fees that may exceed fair market rents of similar facilities in the area
3. When a home corporation struggles to find suitable rentals to pay its bills because of local competitively priced facilities
4. When the local reputation of the Knights of Columbus is defined more by non-Knights of Columbus rentals of a home corporation's facilities than by the Order's charitable and evangelical mission
5. When there is strife, factionalism and outright conflict among members concerning the home corporation's problems

What is the deadline for councils using Home Corporation facilities to determine whether it should continue to use such facilities?

Councils that decide to continue using home corporation facilities should enter into agreements on or before Jan. 1, 2017. Likewise, councils that determine they must move to a parish should do so no later than Jan. 1, 2017.

BUILDING THE DOMESTIC CHURCH WHILE STRENGTHENING OUR PARISH

A Knights of Columbus Initiative

Meeting with Your Pastor – Grand Knight's Preparation

1. Ask your pastor for a meeting to discuss the new *Building the Domestic Church* initiative and how it will enhance your council's relationship with your parish. If your pastor is not your council chaplain, be sure to set a time when your chaplain can also attend a meeting with your pastor.
2. Read the Supreme Knight's December and January columns in *Columbia* magazine in advance of your meeting.
3. Bring a copy of the *Building the Domestic Church: The Family Fully Alive* (#10162) program booklet to the meeting for discussion.
4. Be open to new ideas and opportunities that your pastor may have for your council.
5. Make plans to continue this conversation with your pastor as new Domestic Church materials become available from the Supreme Council.

Conversation Topics and Questions

The Building the Domestic Church initiative is intended to strengthen and support Catholic families. In order accomplish this Knights of Columbus and their families must be fully integrated into the sacramental life of the parish.

This initiative is a direct response to Pope Francis' call for a new alliance between the Church and the family. Knights of Columbus resources, programs and membership should be utilized to support the programs and initiatives of their parishes.

- What are the top parish priorities over the next few years? How can your council lead or support those initiatives?
- What is your council already doing that your pastor and parish would like you to continue or expand in support of parish families?
- How can the council be a vehicle for the men of your parish to grow in their faith and support and nurture the Catholic faith within their families?
- Could the Family Fully Alive monthly program be incorporated into the parish's ministry to families? How can the Knights of Columbus help to facilitate this experience?

Under the banner of our new initiative, *Building the Domestic Church*, we are aligning our youth activities with the mission and goals of our parishes and providing volunteers and financial support for those initiatives.

- How is youth ministry currently being run and supported at the parish? How can your council members be more supportive or involved in the parish-based youth ministry activities?
- *(If you have a Squire Circle)* Would the pastor like the council to continue to support and administer the circle as a young men's ministry of the parish? If not, what is the youth activity program or ministry that could use the support of the council?
- *(If you sponsor a Boy Scout Troop)* Knights of Columbus will no longer be a sponsoring entity for BSA troops but are encouraged to continue their volunteer and financial support through the parish. Would the parish like to sponsor the charter of the Boy Scout Troop as a ministry of the parish? This would mean that the parish would become the charter sponsor of the troop. If the pastor wishes, the council can still lend financial support and organizational leadership.