

# Report of the State Deputy

Red Lion Paper Valley  
Appleton, WI  
April 27, 2019

Dear Brother Knights:

“Pride, Service and Responsibility”. When I took the office of State Deputy, I dedicated my term to Father McGivney and I asked each attendee at the convention to take Pride, in themselves as Knights, renew their service obligation to our Mother Church, our Bishops and Priests, and take responsibility to grow our order by asking each eligible Catholic man to join us. This past year the state officer team has met many challenges set before them and our watchword “Nunc Coepi” now I begin has been our constant reminder that every time we fell or thought we were falling, we needed to pick ourselves up and keep Father McGivney’s vision alive moving forward. I hope to explain where we have had areas of success and areas we need to improve upon, and give some examples of Faith in Action around our state. My theme for this weekend is “Conversation to Conversion” a key factor growing the order in Wisconsin and implement Supremes new Faith in Action program model.

## **State Officers**

Lisa and I want to express our deepest thanks to Father Cyril Guise. Father Cyril has been there every time when I needed him sometimes to consult, sometimes just to listen to me and sometimes just pray together. Our State Chaplain has gone beyond his calling to give the State Council his support and guidance. Unfortunately Father's health has prevented him to be as active with the State Council as he would like and has requested to step down as our State

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Chaplain. Father Cyril will be greatly missed, please pray for his continued good health.

The success of any State Council comes from a team that works together and you can be proud of your team of State Officers and their ladies. SS Patrick Reiff and Therese, ST Michael Tomsyck and Kim, SA John Huttenhoff and Linda, SW Corey Coonen, and IPSD Timothy Guski and Angi. Lisa and I thank you for your dedication, counsel and friendship. The State Officer team goes beyond just the state officers, we could not perform if it not for the support and dedication provided by men like; Membership Director PSD Ron Faust, Programs Director Bill Frayer, and their wives, all the District Deputies and their wives and all the various Directors and Coordinators and their wives, as well all our PSDs, their dedication to the Order and the support they have given to Lisa and I has not gone unnoticed. I also want to personally thank my wife Lisa, she has been my rock, throughout the year, and is the one who keeps me grounded – isn't that the way it usually is?

Would you please stand a recognize these men and their wives for their dedication and support to our Order. Thank you.

### **State Office**

With only one full-time employee the demands of 36,500 members, 300 councils, 63 District Deputies, 78 committeemen and a State Deputy who is a pain, can be overwhelming at times. Our Administrator Manager Tony Schreiner has done an outstanding job in handling the day to day operations and coordinating the many aspects and events we hold as State Council. Thank you, Tony! I also want to thank PSD Timothy Genthe, for his dedication to the State Council, his advice, guidance and attention to detail particularly with

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regards to our state finances is very much appreciated. We will be adding even more office. Under the two T's (Tony and Tim) and with the help of Joe Uchytel we have begun to automate even further forms and billing processes – councils now can be billed with an email from the State Office, reducing our cost of paper and postage. The state team is also looking at upgrading our office infrastructure, including communications, internet, and printing functions.

### **Necrology**

We will remember all our deceased members of the Wisconsin Jurisdiction this afternoon at the Memorial Mass. Each of them served the Wisconsin Jurisdiction with pride, service and responsibility. Two of these deceased members, PSD George Kaczmarek, Former Master and Former Vice Supreme Master and PSD Roland Ransom and Former Master served our jurisdiction with pride for many years. We also lost fourteen Former District Deputies, a Past State Deputy from Tennessee, wife of Past Supreme Advocate, and Madison Diocesan Bishop Robert Morlino this year. Please remember them in your prayers.

### **Faith in Action**

Supremes new model for our programs, Faith in Action will help us to start that conversation. State Program Director Bill Frayer, together with his team of Diocesan Directors; Michael Bushman, Bruce Jerue, and Bill Paar oversee all of the programs in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction. We are still in need of a Program Coordinator in Milwaukee and Superior Dioceses. As we continue to integrate Supremes Faith in Action model, our program coordinators

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responsibilities will grow. This skeleton crew has performed well considering the many challenges set before them. Moving forward you will see many improvements in the way we communicate to our councils, I have asked each coordinator to begin utilizing our State Website and Flocknote emailing system to the fullest potential to ensure councils receive updated program notices, and changes in a timely manner. We simply must do a better job in this area, Faith in Action is too important for us to fail and I am convinced that if we get this one thing right, and we do it well, we will grow our order and the Catholic Church in Wisconsin, using this is the model as our guide. For those of you who were able to attend this morning's Membership Seminar you heard from several Brothers who have had this success, and I want to thank the panel members for sharing their experiences with us.

### **Safe Environment**

Last year we took a big hit in our efforts to ensure every council was compliant with Supreme Councils Safe Environment requirements. As of this report I am sad to say that only 30% of our councils are 100% compliant. I want to thank WSA John Huttenoff for his diligent work in tracking and responding to our councils needs and requests with regard to Safe Environment requirement. I am asking each Grand Knight today to get this Supreme requirement done. There simply is no excuse, if you have questions please contact our Worthy State Advocate.

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## **Faith**

### **Building the Domestic Church Kiosk**

This year we have has placed several Kiosks throughout the state. Part of the success formula of establishing a new Council or growing council membership is demonstrating to the parish community our commitment to the parish spiritual health and wellbeing of their families. The Domestic Church Kiosk is just one of the many way's councils can become relevant in their parishes. Holy Hill Council 7798 has bought into this program and elevated it to a new level, check out their display next to the membership table. This can work for you as well.

### **Marian Prayer Program**

Starting in November of this past year we began another Supreme Marian Prayer Program featuring the image of *Our Lady Help of Persecuted Christians*. This icon will be touring the Wisconsin Jurisdiction throughout this next fraternal year. I would like to thank the councils and districts that have held and will be holding this prayer service honoring our Mother. This year, the prayer service is intended to raise awareness of the plight of Christians persecuted for their faith and to stand in prayerful solidarity with them. The schedule has been posted on the Forms page of our state website. I want to thank Brother Kevin Blau for heading up this program. I would like to take a moment as we stand in solidarity and pray the prayer for persecuted Christians.

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### **Christian Refugee Relief**

I would be remiss if I did not report on our efforts of giving the Wisconsin Knights have shown toward Supremes Christian Refugee Relief program. Supreme Council is beginning a new initiative to provide support to our brothers and sisters in Iraq. The needs that we are filling were communicated to the Supreme Knight during his recent visit to Iraq a few months ago. Supreme is calling it “Adopt a Parish”. The goal is to pare the top councils who have very generously supported the Christian Refugee fund with one of 60 parishes in Iraq. Supreme is hoping and I am asking these councils to accept this invitation to partner directly with a parish and have the opportunity to communicate directly with them, build a relationship, and see exactly where their support is going and the impact it they are having. Councils: 3825, Whitehall; 4628, Rothschild; 5397, Spooner, 6508; Edgerton; 6547, Milton; 7798, Hubertus; 11155, Verona; 16280, Marathon;16821, Oak Creek; are those councils being recognized by Supreme. Please show them our appreciation. Over the next few weeks we will learn more about this new initiative and communicate this to the entire state.

### **Silver Rose**

This summer we will have another opportunity to host the Our Lady of Guadalupe Silver Rose program once again traveling throughout our jurisdiction for three weeks. The Silver Rose program is an opportunity for us to share the message of Our Lady of Guadalupe and promote respect for life by participating in this meaningful pilgrimage. If your council wants to be involved in this program, please contact our State Silver Rose Program Coordinator John Sustar.

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### **Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP)**

Wisconsin Knights stand in complete solidarity with our priests and religious. As one of Supremes featured programs under Faith in Action our RSVP contributions are second to none. With only 128 councils and assemblies reporting in 2018, I am proud to report that the Councils of the Wisconsin Jurisdiction gave \$160,263 up over \$11,000 from the previous year to 295 seminarians with Supreme refunding \$31,900 to local councils and assemblies. This ranks the Wisconsin Jurisdiction in the top six of the order in donations to the RSVP program. Over the last eight years, Wisconsin councils have given over \$1 million dollars to our Seminarians. Give yourself a standing ovation.

### **Penny a Knight a Day (PKD)**

This state ran program was started in 1970 by State Deputy Edward Quillin, to generate funds for our Bishops to use for Catholic Education. This past year our councils raised over \$44,279 for our Bishops, down over \$4,000 from the previous year. As of March 1, 2019 our councils have only contributed \$24,733, I am asking each council's Grand Knight to put this program on your May council's agenda, under new business, this will ensure 100% donation to the fund, this is our goal. I would like also to remind our Grand Knights that members who donate through your council are expecting their donations to PKD or any other program to go to that program.

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## **Community**

### **Disaster Preparedness**

Under the guidance of our Disaster Relief Director Paul Lang, you can be proud of the team we have in place. We started the year off with a bang, literally, when in July, we heard and saw Sun Prairie downtown gas main explosion, local councils donated over \$4,800 to displaced families. This was followed by the August rains and widespread flooding. Where again, local Knights stepped up to help sandbag multiple communities to ensure homes, lives and valuables were not lost from the rising waters. We could be seen helping in places like Reedsburg, Madison, La Crosse, and Montello. The Disaster Relief Program is a great way to get members and parishioners involved and an even better way to provide prospective membership opportunities to our parishes. For more information on how you can help, contact Paul Lang or any of the committee members at their table. I would like to recognize the committee for all their work – please join me in showing these men our appreciation.

### **Charity Raffle**

Our Charity Raffle is one of the star programs in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction. The mission statement of the Charity Committee states; “Grants from the Charity Fund will help alleviate sorrow, ease financial burdens and restore hope to families and victims of accidents and illness. This fund will also be the source of funding for vocations by the State Council.” I feel that it is important to live up to this mission statement and remind the State Council and the subordinate councils the need to follow this mission statement when allocating funds from the Charity account.

After the 2017-2018 raffle, the State Council distributed \$301,573 to councils who participated in the raffle. One of the most satisfying aspects of being on the

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board is allocating State Grant requests on behalf of the State Council; last year the State Council had \$194,497 allocated for Charity and Fire requests. As of March, the State Council has provided over \$148,849 in grants requests.

Brother Mark Kohls, Charity Committee Chairman hears incredibly grateful stories of Grant recipients from District Deputies and Grand Knights throughout the state. This has demonstrated to me how critically important our mission of Charity is!

We, the State Officers, and all the WI KofC Brothers are proud of the way Mark and his committee has continued to grow our Charity Raffle. Their diligent work has ensured that the State Charity fund continues to be a strong and viable resource now and into the future.

Unfortunately, Brother Mark will be stepping down as Chairman of this committee at the end of the current Fraternal Year. But we are fortunate that Brother Thomas Lange of Council 1964 (West Bend) will be stepping in as Mark's successor ensuring a smooth transition. I am looking forward to working with Brother Tom and the continued success and leadership the committee will provide.

### **Youth**

As with all directors, Randall DeMars and Miles Casey have given countless hours of time to Punt, Pass, & Kick, Soccer, Christmas Poster, Knowledge, and Free Throw competitions, that help the Knights of Columbus remain relevant with the youth of Wisconsin. I am proud to report that these programs are still strong in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction and will continue to grow over the years.

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## **Family**

### **Family of the Month/Year**

The Wisconsin Jurisdiction has led all other Jurisdictions in the order in the submission of the new Family of the Month Report Form #10668. I ask every council to continue to submit a family of the Month every month. Wisconsin can be proud of our families and we need to do a better job telling their stories. Lisa and I extend our congratulations to the diocesan families of the year winners and tonight at the State Deputy's Banquet you will meet this year's State Family of the Year. I also want to thank Joe Uchytel and his wife Mary for their many hours of dedication and support to our councils and families through our Family of the Month program as well as their efforts in promoting the "Marriage Prayer" program. Please visit our Family table and Joe for more information.

## **Life**

Without life there are no programs or new members. Dan Miller, and his committee are building this Culture of Life through the State Essay Contest program, the successful solicitation of donations to the Respect for Life Fund, Life Savers for Life program and promotion of Life events, like 40 Days for Life and March 4-Life. To enhance our State Life committee I have asked Dan to step down to serve as a committee member concentrating his efforts on Pro-Life initiatives, while George Ploof will manage the entire Life program overseeing, the Essay contest, Ultrasound and many other aspects of Supreme Life initiatives under the Faith in Action model.

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### **Life Savers for Life**

The Life Savers for Life program is struggling, before his passing, Brother Roland Ransom began to turn this program around and we started to grow ever so slightly. I ask every council to consider running this program and help build the Culture of Life. I am also seeking someone to head up this important program. If you are interested or know someone who might have a passion for this work, please contact me.

### **Ultrasound**

While this is a Supreme Program, the councils of the Wisconsin Jurisdiction have excelled in raising funds for the placement of 30 plus Ultrasound machines over the years in various pregnancy resource centers throughout the state. We also have several councils that are in the process of raising funds for the purchase of additional Ultrasound machines. I want to thank Dan Miller and George Ploof for their diligent efforts and expert advice to our councils and districts wishing to participate in the Ultrasound initiative.

### **Helping People with Intellectual Disabilities**

The ongoing success of this program, better known as the “Tootsie Roll Drive”, enables the State Council to distribute thousands of dollars to people in dire need of assistance. Under the leadership of Mark Jelinek, his Diocesan Coordinators work diligently to ensure that the funds we raise in the drive are distributed to facilities that meet the criteria set forth by the State and the Committee.

This year I have asked brother Mark to step down as Director of this committee and begin this next year as our State Membership Director. I would like to ask everyone to thank Brother Mark for his service.

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One of the many organizations that receive assistance from the ID program is Special Olympics and I have asked the committee and they have accepted the challenge of forming a new partnership with Wisconsin Special Olympics to develop better lines of communications with regional directors and local councils throughout the state to allow councils better access to events occurring in their area to volunteer and support. As a side note, I want to recognize Bryce Lisowski our Special Olympics Chairman for his many years of service working with Wisconsin Special Olympics, he has asked to step down at the end of the year and we are looking for his replacement.

### **Other**

#### **History Book**

I am concerned by the growing trend of councils not submitting a History Book. With less than 35% of councils submitting History Books, this program will die. It does not take that much time to compile the history of their council. Keeping a council's historical records, memories, and use as a membership recruitment tool, are just a few of the many reasons to complete a book. Another good reason is to show your pride in your council, a record of event, can go a long way in convincing someone to join your council.

Submission of a History Book is a state requirement to obtain Complete Council and State Deputy Trophy awards. I want to thank our State Historian Brother Charles Silver for his many years of service to Wisconsin.

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## **College Councils**

The College Council's in Madison, and Milwaukee, are doing great things. UW Madison Council was once again awarded Star Council three straight years. However, I must report that College Councils at St. Norbert in De Pere and UW-River Falls have come under some hard times. Without a viable College State Director guiding these Councils toward the vision of Father McGivney, we will continue to see a decline in our College Councils membership. This is a huge concern, successful college councils recruit on average ten new members per year, are the most enthusiastic and active members, and after graduating become our next generation of council officers. Bottom line, we need a State College Coordinator to work with these councils and local colleges to grow this program. If you are interested or know of someone who would be please contact me.

## **Medallion**

One of the highest awards a Wisconsin Knight of Columbus member can receive is the Medallion Award. PSD Timothy Genthe and his committee spent many hours evaluating the applications. Each man nominated should be proud that his council felt compelled to nominate him. Please see the front section of the Convention Book for the men that were selected this year. Each of these men and their ladies will be honored at tonight's State Deputy Banquet.

## **Bowling**

This is by far one of the most popular council activities in the state. This past year, the bowling committee made some big changes for the tournament, as they moved from a 5-man team to 4-man team venue, while allowing teams to have two non-KC members join as potential new members. Howard Council

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6279 hosted the 103<sup>rd</sup> state tournament at the Rivier Lanes in Green Bay. The early results show the changes had a positive effect on the tournament, and in fact recruited over 30 new members! Was your council at this tournament? I challenge every council to participate in Manitowoc and Two Rivers next year. Under the watchful eye of Chairman Andy Caelwaerts and his committee, a great tournament is conducted every year.

### **Golf**

If you want to get away with your wife for a weekend, the State Golf Tournament is a program for you. Both you and your wife can participate and you will meet new couples that share a common interest. This year's tournament is being hosted by Merrill Council 1133 in Merrill on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Why not stop and see Chairman Kevin Cohrs and sign up. The Golf program is in need of a State Coordinator as well.

### **Camping**

This is truly a family activity that is well received by the members of the Knights of Columbus in Wisconsin. This year's 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Camporee will be held at the Stoney Creek RV Resort and Campgrounds in Osseo on June 21 - 23. Stop by the State Camping display and talk to our State Camping Coordinators Joseph and Mary Huser to learn more about this program.

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## **Country Store**

Under the direction of Jim and Kim Neumaier, our Country Store continues to grow. This year the Country Store had a good year and had significantly more activity resulting in merchandise purchases. The State Officer team is committed to keeping the store a viable resource for our members.

## **Ceremonials**

Do you remember the lessons of our order? These quality lessons teach us Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. The people who give of their time and talents are numerous, and without them we would not have new members. I cannot thank State Ceremonial Coordinator Brother Michael Jordan and all the CO's and team leaders for their hard work and dedication to our Order. Grand Knights, you need to ensure your scheduling your Admissions degrees on a regular basis, I am asking all District Deputies to schedule at least one Admissions degree per-month in their District, this schedule must be posted on the state website. If you are having difficulties posting these degrees, please see our WST Michael Tomsyck for assistance.

## **Round Table**

Under the guidance of our State Round Table Coordinator Tom Hoffman, the number of Council Round Tables have grown over the years. We have many councils in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction that have working relationships with many parishes, but do not file the report appointing the council coordinator responsible for helping these priests. We need to continue helping and working with these parish that do not have a Knights of Columbus council presence. The key word here is working with your parish – this is not another

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form just to fill out and submit to Supreme. Councils need to be active in their support.

### **New Council Development**

I am proud to announce we finished last fraternal year with two additional new councils in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction. We need to congratulate the membership and officers of new council; 17021 in Boyceville and 17035 at St. Bernards in Abbotsford, the third Hispanic Council started in Wisconsin. We started slower this fraternal year, having added only two new council to date, we welcome members and officers of new councils 17135 in Big River and Council 17149 in Dyckesville. I would like to thank the many members, State and Diocesan Program and Membership Coordinators, District Deputies, State Officers and New Council Development Director Jim Sloane and former NCD Director James Stachura for the many hours and miles they have logged with starting of these councils. They are truly living up to Father McGivney's dream, "A society of Catholic men organized in every parish that would stand in solidarity with our priests, supporting them in their vocation and mission".

### **Insurance**

One of the reasons Father McGivney started the Knights of Columbus was for the care of the widows and children. We are blessed in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction to have great General Agents and their Field Agents; they have a vested interest in helping your councils grow.

Not only do they serve the needs of our membership by providing them Insurance products, but they are also a big part of the membership program in Wisconsin. These men are very committed to reaching our membership goals. Your council membership recruitment team needs to include both the General

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Agent and Field Agent in your area. If it does not, do not leave here this weekend without contacting them and inviting them to your next meeting. They are here to serve; I just ask that you let them do their job.

### **Membership**

Membership growth in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction has been in a decline for many years and I would like to stand here and say that we turned the corner, but I cannot. At the time of the writing of this report, we still have 114 councils that have not recruited a new member yet this fraternal year, that is over a third of the councils. I am reminded why Fr. McGivney founded your great order. He saw the need for a Catholic fraternal society to help men preserve and defend their Faith; to support their parish, to provide for their families and help those who are less fortunate. I ask you, has the needs of today's society changed much from Fr. McGivney's vision? I think not.

I want to thank PSD Ronald Faust for his dedication to the Wisconsin Jurisdiction, his dedicated state membership team has accomplished great things working with councils to grow and I thank each of these men for their dedication to our councils. However, it is time for a change.

As indicated earlier in my report, I am appointing Mark Jelinek as our State Membership Director. He has already been working to develop teams of coordinators. His focus is simple: build membership teams to support local councils. His goal is to make Wisconsin Net/Net Positive one. We are going to do this by asking the questions: How are you planning on bringing in new members? Church drives, Insurance Promotion, Programs, Personal Contact, Readmission, or something else? How many members in your council are going to die? How many are you planning on suspending? All very simple questions that a larger membership team will help our District Deputies and Grand Knights answer.

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Membership recruitment and retention is everyone's responsibility and it needs to be a way of life for each council. Had we cut suspensions in half over the last 15 years our membership would be well above 40,000 members strong. Your State Officer team will continue to evaluate retention and will be rolling out a new program this summer to help councils retain those members who we have lost contact with and encourage all councils to begin having those conversations with all their members. I ask you, has your council been relevant to the needs of your parish, your members and your community?

### **Conclusion**

From this report it is easy to see that the state of the Knights of Columbus in the Wisconsin is strong, and our programs are relevant. We are living up to Father McGivney vision, by expressing our solidarity with our Holy Father, Pope Francis to be our brother's keeper.

But how long can we maintain this level of programming with our membership numbers in a decline, suspensions and withdrawals spiraling out of control and councils not embracing Faith in Action, how soon do we become irrelevant? I am simply asking that every council in the Wisconsin Jurisdiction grow in membership and embrace Faith in Action.

To quote Pope Benedict XVI "Was not this unity of vision and purpose – rooted in faith and a spirit of constant conversion and self-sacrifice – the secret of the impressive growth of the Church in this country? We need but think of the remarkable accomplishment of that exemplary American priest, the Venerable Michael McGivney, whose vision and zeal led to the establishment of the Knights of Columbus." Gentlemen, we need not only live up to this vision, but we must live it and embrace it.

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Having that conversation with the family in the pew in front of you, your neighbor, your boss, your co-worker, your friends and families can ultimately lead to their conversion of faith. The conversion is a journey and the Knights of Columbus through the implementation of our Faith in Action model will help us engage those families, we must lead, we must show Pride in our Order, Service to our neighbor, and be Responsible to each other for the growth of our Order and the growth of our Catholic Faith. WE ARE KNIGHTS!

Vivat Jesus

Respectfully Submitted,

Jack V. Wrbanich,

State Deputy