History of the Knights of Columbus

Founding and Early Acts

Our Founding 1882 – 1899

*The Knights of Columbus is founded by Father Michael J. McGivney on Feb. 6, 1882 with a mission of charity.*

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FOUNDED**

Late-19th century Connecticut was marked by the growing fraternal benefit societies, anti-Catholic prejudice and dangerous factory working conditions that left many families fatherless. Recognizing a need in his community, Father Michael J. McGivney, the 29-year-old assistant pastor of St. Mary’s Church in New Haven, Conn., gathered a group of men at his parish on Oct. 2, 1881. He proposed establishing a lay organization to prevent Catholic men from entering secret societies antithetical to Church teaching, uniting Catholic men and helping families of deceased members.

To demonstrate their loyalty to their country as well as their faith, these men took Christopher Columbus — recognized as a Catholic and celebrated as the discoverer of America — as their patron. The Knights of Columbus elected officers in February 1882 and assumed corporate status on March 29.

In addition to the Order’s benefits, Catholic men were drawn to the Knights because of its emphasis on serving one’s Church, community and family with virtue. Fraternity and patriotism were added to the Knights’ founding principles of charity and unity in 1885 and 1900, respectively.

1882: The Knights of Columbus is born on Feb. 6, 1882, when the first members choose Columbus as their patron. Immediately after the Order’s March 29 incorporation, Father McGivney sends a diocesan-wide appeal for new members to priests.
1886: By the end of his four-year term as supreme knight, James T. Mullen presides at the institution of 22 of the first 38 councils. John J. Phelan is elected and is the first supreme knight to see the Order’s future as a national society.

1890: Father McGivney dies Aug. 14, 1890.

1892: The Order passes laws allowing noninsurance (associate members) to join.

1892: 6,000 Knights march in the New Haven Columbus Day parade to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ discovery of the New World.

1895: The Vatican’s first acknowledgment of the Knights comes when Archbishop Francesco Satolli, apostolic delegate to the United States, writes a letter extolling the “merits of this splendid Catholic organization” and giving the Order his apostolic blessing.

1897: On Nov. 25, 1897, Canada’s first council — Montreal Council 284 — is chartered.
Fledgling to Thriving 1900 – 1909

The fledgling Order grows dramatically at the beginning of the 20th century to serve communities beyond the United States.

1900-1909 EARLY ACTS

At the start of the 20th century, the Knights of Columbus grew dramatically in response to the needs of communities within the United States but well beyond. By 1910, councils had been chartered throughout the United States and Canada, and international expansion continued into Mexico, the Philippines, Cuba and Panama.

During this early period, the Knights also turned to college campuses. In 1904 Knights and their families attended ceremonies at The Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., in which the Order presented the school with a grant to establish a K of C chair of American history. Chartered in 1910, Notre Dame Council 1477 was the Order’s first college council, launching college councils that today includes 244 schools worldwide.

1900: The first exemplification of the Fourth Degree takes place on Feb. 22, 1900, in New York City where 1,100 Knights receive the degree. The following May, another 750 Knights take the degree in Boston.

1904: More than 10,000 Knights and their families attend ceremonies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., in which a check for $55,633.79 is presented to the school for the establishment of a K of C chair of American history. From 1909 to 1913, Knights raise $500,000 to establish a permanent endowment for CUA.
1905: The first council in the Philippines — Manila Council 1000 — is chartered after the Spanish-American War. The same year, the Order expanded to Mexico, establishing Guadalupe Council 1050 in Mexico City.

1906: The Knights of Columbus moves to a new headquarters in New Haven, right by the New Haven green.

1909: U.S. workers in the Canal Zone start Balboa Council 1371 in Panama City and San Agustin Council 1390 is instituted in Havana, Cuba.

1909: A reported 5,000 Knights meet James A. Flaherty’s train in Philadelphia in 1909 when he arrives at the annual convention where he is elected supreme knight.
During the Great War, Knights of Columbus Huts provide services under the motto "Everybody Welcome, Everything Free" - a philosophy upheld in today's charitable programs.

1910-1918 EVERYONE WELCOME

As membership in the Knights of Columbus grew, the Order became known as a force for public good. Following the dedication ceremony for the Christopher Columbus Memorial Fountain in Washington, D.C., in 1912, a reporter for The Washington Star noted the large number of Knights in attendance “marked anew the important position of the Knights of Columbus as an order in the social fabric of the United States.”

During World War I, the Order provided rest and recreational facilities and social services to Allied servicemen of all faiths. K of C Huts throughout the United States and Europe provided religious services, supplies and recreation under the motto, “ Everybody Welcome, Everything Free.”

Everybody meant everybody. Whatever your race or creed, you were welcome at K of C facilities. In fact, the Order was praised by a contemporary African American historian of World War I, because “unlike the other social welfare organizations operating in the war, it never drew the color line.”

As a result of the Order’s wartime work, which earned high praise from Pope Benedict XV, nearly 400,000 men joined the Knights between 1917 and 1923.

1912 (left image): With support from the Knights, the Christopher Columbus Memorial Fountain is dedicated in Washington, D.C. Some 20,000 Knights attend the ceremonies, which are overseen by President William H. Taft.

1914: Tens of thousands of copies of a “bogus oath” are circulated to defame the Knights of Columbus. The Knights, in turn, lay the groundwork for a lecture series and educational programs to combat anti-Catholic hostility. Between 1914 and 1917, the number of anti-Catholic publications drops from 60 to fewer than five.
1917: When the United States enters World War I, Supreme Knight Flaherty writes President Woodrow Wilson telling him that the Order plans to establish centers to provide for the troops’ “recreational and spiritual comfort.” The Knights’ services, he says, will be offered “regardless of creed.”

1917: By the summer of 1917, the Order opens service centers, or “K of C Huts,” in training camps and behind the lines of battle. The Knights and independent fund drives raise nearly $30 million to finance the huts.

Charity And Outreach
IN SEARCH OF LIBERTY  1919-1929
The Order spearheads anti-defamation work in the U.S. and takes a stands for religious freedom in Mexico.

1919-1929 IN SEARCH OF LIBERTY

After the Great War, the Knights of Columbus continued its charitable work, offering education and employment services to returning servicemen. In less than two years, the Knights of Columbus Bureau of Employment placed some 100,000 people in jobs. The Order’s presence in Europe continued in August 1920, when a delegation of 235 Knights made a pilgrimage to Rome, Pope Benedict XV invited them to build several recreation centers for Roman youth. The architect of these centers, Count Enrico Galeazzi, went on to serve as the Knights’ representative in Rome for more than six decades.

Throughout the 1920s, the Order’s anti-defamation work also continued. When the Ku Klux Klan and other “nativist” and anti-Catholic groups launched campaigns to make students attend public schools, Church leaders enlisted the Knights’ support. The K of C Historical Commission, meanwhile, worked to overcome racial prejudice in American society, publishing books on the contributions of African-, Jewish-, and German-Americans.

The Great Depression initially had hurt the Order’s membership and finances, but it also led to a renewed sense of volunteer service.

1920: Two years after launching educational, vocational and employment programs for World War I veterans, more than 50,000 students are enrolled in K of C-sponsored evening school programs across the United States and Canada. The Order also launches a correspondence school.
1920: 235 Knights sail from New York City to France. In Paris, they are greeted by Church and civic authorities, who thank the Knights for their WWI work. In Metz, a large equestrian statue of the French Revolutionary War hero Lafayette, funded by the Knights, is unveiled. The K of C delegation continues to Rome, where it is received in a private audience with Pope Benedict XV on Aug. 28, 1920.

1923: In response to the passage of laws in Oregon prohibiting children under 16 from attending private schools, the Knights work to overturn the law. In 1925, the Supreme Court declares the Oregon law unconstitutional.

1924: In response to a request from Pope Benedict XV, the Knights open St. Peter’s Oratory, the first K of C recreation center for youth in Rome. Four more are established between 1924 and 1927.

1925: The Knights’ Rome youth work stimulates interest in similar projects in North America, and the Columbian Squires program is established. Brother Barnabas McDonald consults with the Knights on the creation of the Squires. The institution of the first Squires circle takes place at the Supreme Council meeting in Duluth, Minn.

1926: Supreme Knight Flaherty, Deputy Supreme Knight Martin H. Carmody and other K of C officers meet with President Calvin Coolidge about the persecution of the Catholic Church in Mexico. The Order launches a $1 million educational campaign to influence American public opinion on the need for a strong stand against the Mexican government’s attacks on the Church. It takes more than 10 years for the tensions to ease.
HELPING NEIGHBORS   1930-1940

The Great Depression leads to a renewed sense of volunteer service - and Knights across the nation step up.

1930-1940 NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

In the early 1930s, the threat of atheistic communism was growing in Europe. In response, the Knights organized anti-communist rallies in early 1937. When Pope Pius XI's encyclical on the subject, *Divini Redemptoris*, was released in March of that year, the Order printed and distributed a million copies. The Knights also sponsored a new lecture tour and expanded its anti-communism program to include a Crusade for Social Justice.

1932: The 50th anniversary of the Knights is celebrated with Commemoration Week, June 24-30, 1932. Among the highlights is the unveiling in Washington, D.C. of a statue of Cardinal James Gibbons, an early supporter of the Knights who ordained Father McGivney.

1935: On July 8, 1935, Supreme Knight Martin Carmody and other K of C officials meet with President Franklin D. Roosevelt about the ongoing situation in Mexico.

1936: Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, Vatican secretary of state, visits the Knights of Columbus headquarters in New Haven; in 1939, Cardinal Pacelli becomes Pope Pius XII.

1939: Less than two weeks after World War II begins, Canadian Knights establish a welfare program for soldiers comparable to the KC huts program that operated during World War I. Within a year, Canadian Knights raise nearly $250,000 to support troops.
WAR & PEACE 1941-1950

Following the end of World War II, the Order turns its attention to the growing threats of communism and fascism, which threaten communities and religious freedoms.

1941-1950 WAR & PEACE

By the time of the Pearl Harbor attack and the United States entry into World War II in 1941, a K of C welfare program for servicemen had been well established by Canadian Knights, built and modeled on the Knights’ World War I work at the Supreme Convention in 1944, the Order established a $1 million trust fund for the children of members who died or became disabled in World War II. Following the end of the war in 1945, the Order turned its attention to the growing threats of communism and fascism. To combat these dangers, the Knights launched in 1946 the Crusade for the Preservation and Promotion of American Ideals, which published books and pamphlets to educate the public on “the perils of communism”.

Meanwhile, the postwar years saw a membership boom for the Order in the Philippines. Jesuit Father George J. Willmann envisioned the Knights as the premiere lay society in the Philippines and set about establishing councils and recruiting members. He appealed to the Supreme Council in 1947 for permission to establish three new councils in the Philippines and served as the country’s first district deputy. By the time Supreme Knight Luke E. Hart visited Manila in 1955, the Order had expanded to include 50 Filipino councils.

1941: When the U.S. enters World War II, the Order’s outreach to soldiers is conducted via the National Catholic Community Service organization. The NCCS models many of its programs on the Order’s successful WWI efforts.

1944: The Order creates a $1 million trust fund for the education of children of members who lost their lives in or as a result of World War II. This evolves into the current scholarship fund for use at Catholic colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.

1945: John E. Swift is elected supreme knight. Among his first initiatives is to authorize funding for full-page advertisements in 12 major U.S. newspapers and five Canadian papers highlighting the dangers of communism. The ad offers a free copy of Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen’s pamphlet, “Communism, the Opium of the People.”

1946: The Order launches its Crusade for the Preservation and Promotion of American Ideals. Educational pamphlets on communism and the dangers of secularism are published and distributed. By August 1948, there are more than 1,300 K of C discussion groups.

1947: Several hundred radio stations broadcast K of C-sponsored programs with the titles “Safeguards of America” and “Foundations of Our American Ideals.”
"ONE NATION UNDER GOD"  1951-1960

In 1954, the words "under God" are added to the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance completing an effort the Knights began three years earlier.

1951-1960 “ONE NATION UNDER GOD”

The Knights of Columbus initiated a campaign in 1951 for the public adoption of the phrase “under God” in the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance. One year after Supreme Knight Hart took office in 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a law that officially added the words “under God” to the pledge.

In the following years, the Knights made significant contributions to the Catholic Church in America. In 1953, a Catholic advertising program launched by Knights in Missouri was officially adopted by the Order as the Religious Information Bureau. It later became known as the Catholic Information Service when it moved to New Haven in 1969, through which Knights printed and disseminated brochures and pamphlets about the Catholic faith. The program also included a correspondence course for subscribers to learn about or clarify their knowledge of Church teachings.

Finally, the close of the 1950s saw the completion of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The Order contributed $1 million toward the completion of the church’s bell tower, known as the Knights’ Tower, and more than 1,000 Knights formed an honor guard for the dedication.

1951: The Order votes to fund the microfilming of irreplaceable documents from the Vatican Library, some dating to the pre-Christian era. The library at St. Louis University is named as the repository for the microfilm. By the 1956 opening of the Knights of Columbus Vatican Film Library at St. Louis University, 9.5 million manuscript pages have been microfilmed and made available for scholars.

1953: Luke E. Hart becomes supreme knight; he is the first supreme knight to move to New Haven to assume his duties, reflecting the development of the Knights as a corporation.

1953: For $2.5 million the Knights of Columbus purchases the land that Yankee Stadium is built on. When news breaks of the Knights’ acquisition, councils and members send congratulatory telegrams to New Haven.

1953: A Catholic advertising program launched by Missouri Knights in the 1940s is adopted nationally by the Order. The ads encourage readers to learn more about Catholic teaching by contacting the Religious Information Bureau, later called the Catholic Information Service.
1954: On June 14, 1954, Flag Day, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs a law adding “under God” to the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance, completing an effort Knights began three years earlier.

1959: On Nov. 20, 1959, the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., is dedicated with a more than 1,000 Knight honor guard. Knights contributed $1 million, via a $1.25 per-capita assessment over five years, for construction of the 329-foot bell tower.
The early 1960s marked a period of transformation and upheaval for the Church and society, as the Second Vatican Council convened, and the civil rights movement emerged in full force.

At the 1966 Supreme Convention, Supreme Knight John W. McDevitt said it was time to see the Order as more than just “a fortress” for its members in a world hostile to the Catholic faith. In revising its admission policies and supporting several social justice initiatives, the Order took positive steps to eliminate racial discrimination.

During this time, the Order’s insurance program began a period of dramatic growth. The amount of insurance in force tripled from $1 billion to $3 billion from 1960 to 1975. And in 1969, the Knights built its seventh national headquarters, its current location, to better serve the Order’s members and their families.


1963: In the spring of 1963, Hart attends a special White House meeting of religious leaders to discuss civil rights.

1964: Supreme Knight John W. McDevitt takes office. His first priority is to amend the Order’s admission policies to counter charges of racial discrimination.

1965: In April 1965, the Order co-sponsors with the Archdiocese of Hartford a Conference on Human Rights at Yale University in New Haven. More than 2,000 people attend.
1966: Supreme Knight McDevitt visits the Vatican Transmitting Center for the blessing of a new shortwave radio transmitter donated by the Knights. Pope Paul VI blesses the transmitter.

1969: The present Supreme Council headquarters is completed. Its four 320-foot towers symbolize the Knights’ four principles of charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism.

1969: The Order publishes a booklet on *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical affirming the Church’s teaching on marriage and procreation.

1971: The Order marks the achievement of $2 billion of insurance in force; today that figure is more than $113.5 billion.

1975: The Order agrees to fund “uplink” transmissions for major worldwide satellite telecasts from the Vatican; the program continues to this day with audiences estimated in the billions for Midnight Mass from St. Peter’s Basilica.

1977: Supreme Knight Virgil C. Dechant begins his administration with a visit to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, where he places the Knights of Columbus under the Virgin Mary’s protection.

1978: Beginning this year, each new First Degree Knight receives a rosary blessed by the supreme chaplain, a practice that continues to this day.
1978: Pope John Paul I receives Supreme Knight Dechant and other K of C representatives in the pontiff’s first private audience after his election.

ONE CHRISTIAN FAMILY 1979-1999

During John Paul II’s pontificate, the Knights strengthens ties to the Church through increased support of the Vatican.

1979-1999 ONE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

The Knights of Columbus furthered several initiatives in Catholic education: support of Catholic schools, scholarship funds for Catholic seminaries and universities, and the establishment of a North American campus of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family.

In addition to celebrating the fifth centenary of the evangelization of the New World, the Order also honored contemporary models of holiness. Supreme Knight Dechant presented Mother Teresa with the inaugural Gaudium et Spes Award in 1992, and the Archdiocese of Hartford officially opened the cause for Father McGivney’s canonization, with the Knights’ support, in 1997.

1979: In cooperation with the U.S. bishops, the Order underwrites the filming of Pope John Paul II’s first pastoral visit to the United States.

1979: The Knights establishes a $1 million Father Michael J. McGivney Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education to be administered by the National Catholic Educational Association. Annual proceeds are used to this day to finance programs that advance Catholic schools.

1981: The Order begins a four-year restoration of St. Mary’s Church, the birthplace of the Knights. The renovations include work on the organ, floors, pews, ceilings, statues and more. The project is capped by the placement of a 179-foot steeple atop the church.

1982 (left image): The Knights of Columbus celebrates its centennial. President Ronald Reagan attends the 100th Supreme Convention, as well as Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, sent by Pope John Paul II as his personal envoy.

1982: The Order establishes several funds to help finance studies for priests and seminarians in Rome at pontifical colleges. These funds have been increased over the years to support seminarians and priests from the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Philippines.
1984: In recognition of the Order’s volunteer service, President Ronald Reagan awards the Knights a President’s Volunteer Action Award at a White House ceremony.

1985: The Order agrees to underwrite the restoration of the 65,000-square-foot facade of St. Peter’s Basilica, the first time it has been cleaned in more than 350 years. Several subsequent projects have taken place at St. Peter’s, including the restoration of chapels and of the Holy Year Door.

1988: Mother Teresa visits the Supreme Council office. The Order agrees to print copies of her Constitutions of the Missionaries of Charity, prayer cards and other religious items, a project that continues today.

1988: The Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family opens a North American branch in Washington, D.C., with funding from the Knights. Carl A. Anderson is the institute’s first vice president and dean.

1989: The Bicentennial of the U.S. Hierarchy Fund is established in the amount of $2 million to benefit The Catholic University of America. Earnings from the fund pay for projects at the university each year.

1992: The Knights celebrates the fifth centenary of evangelization in the Americas. Replicas of the Cross of the New World presented to Pope John Paul II on his pastoral visit to Santo Domingo in 1984 are distributed by the Knights for use in dioceses throughout the Order in prayer services highlighting the theme of evangelization.

1992: Mother Teresa is presented with the Order’s first Gaudium et Spes Award at the 110th Supreme Convention in New York. The “Joy and Hope” award acknowledges her contributions to the Church and the world.

1995: The Order co-sponsors with the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., Pope John Paul II’s Mass at Aqueduct Racetrack during the pope’s pastoral visit to the United States.
1997: The Archdiocese of Hartford officially opens the cause for canonization of Father Michael J. McGivney with support from the Knights of Columbus. The Father McGivney Guild is established to promote his cause.

THE NEW MILLENNIUM 2000-2009

*The Order builds upon its tradition of charitable work and spiritual formation.*

2000-2009 THE NEW MILLENNIUM

On May 21, 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized 25 martyrs of Mexico, including six members of the Knights of Columbus. Less than one year later, Carl A. Anderson was installed as the 13th supreme knight in Mexico City and dedicated the Order and his administration to Mary under her title Our Lady of Guadalupe.

After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Order delivered immediate assistance to the families of fallen first responders. When natural disasters struck, such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Knights similarly responded with immediate aid.

Finally, just as they responded to the forces of secularism and prejudice in the past, Knights have stood by their bishops and have witnessed to the importance of religion and religious liberty for society. As the cause for canonization of Venerable Michael McGivney moves forward, so too do his Knights, seeking to build a civilization of love.

2000 (left image): Pope John Paul II canonizes six Mexican priest-members of the Knights of Columbus who were martyred during the persecution of the Church there early in the 20th century. The following year, John Paul II beatifies Blessed Carlos Rodriguez, a layman from Puerto Rico and a member. Three additional members from Mexico have since been beatified, and one canonized.

2001: The Knights of Columbus Museum opens in New Haven. In addition to a permanent exhibit on the Order's history, the museum has featured numerous temporary exhibits and priceless works of art, such as Michelangelo's 16-foot wooden study model for the dome of St. Peter's Basilica.

2001: In response to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, on Sept. 12 the Knights establishes its $1 million Heroes Fund. Checks for $3,000 are presented to the families of all full-time professional law enforcement, firefighters and emergency medical personnel who lost their lives at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Forty-five Knights were killed on 9/11.

2003: 100,000 copies of a pocket-sized prayer book, *Armed With the Faith*, are printed by the Order and the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, and sent to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with 10,000 rosaries.
2005: The Knights send 2,000 wheelchairs to land-mine victims and people with disabilities in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Through its partnership with the Global Wheelchair Mission, Knights have since distributed wheelchairs around the world.

2006: In its first international expansion in almost a century, the Order charters its first councils in Poland, beginning with John Paul II Council 14000 in Krakow.

2006: In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. Gulf, Knights donate more than $10 million and 100,000 volunteer hours to help rebuild Catholic churches and schools.

2007: The Knights of Columbus Incarnation Dome, a 3,780-square-foot mosaic depicting mysteries of Christ’s life, is constructed at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.


2008: The Order is present throughout Pope Benedict XVI’s pastoral visit to the United States. A K of C-commissioned plaque commemorates the pope’s Mass at Yankee Stadium. It accompanies two similar plaques, which commemorate Masses that Pope John Paul II and Pope Paul VI celebrated there.
2008: McGivney Hall, the new home of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University of America, is dedicated Sept. 8.

2009: The Knights of Columbus Ultrasound Initiative launches Jan. 22, 2009. To date, more than 1000 ultrasound machines have been purchased for pro-life pregnancy centers using matching funds from the Order’s Culture of Life Fund, established in 2008.

2009: The Order hosts a “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” summit on volunteerism in New York and designates 2009 as the Year of the Volunteer. The Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids program launches; to date, the initiative has provided more than 500,000 winter coats to children throughout the United States and Canada.

PROTECTING CHRISTIANS 2010-2019

*Iraqi Christians are displaced by ISIS and take refuge. The Knights build a program to support displaced Christians in the Middle East including food and health care.*

2010-2019 PROTECTING CHILDREN

The Order continued its charitable work around the world, advocating for Christians in the Middle East and providing over 1000 ultrasound machines to pregnancy centers. Also, the Saint John Paul II shrine was established in Washington, D.C.

2010: Following the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti, the Order gives immediate assistance to Catholic Relief Services, establishes a relief fund and purchases 1,000 wheelchairs for Haitians suffering
disabilities. In partnership with Project Medishare, the Knights’ “Healing Haiti’s Children” program provides prosthetics and physical therapy for children who lost limbs in the earthquake.

2010: Cardinal Jaime Ortega y Alamino, archbishop of Havana, receives the Gaudium et Spes Award, and with assistance from the Knights, the first new seminary in Cuba in more than 50 years is opened. Two years earlier, a delegation of Knights from Cuba attended the Supreme Convention for the first time in 60 years.

2011: The Order establishes a Shrine of Saint John Paul II in Washington, D.C., at the site of the former John Paul II Cultural Center. Supreme Knight Anderson announces the initiative will include permanent exhibits celebrating the life and teachings of the late pope and the 500-year Catholic heritage of North America.

2012: The Guadalupe Celebration, the largest religious event in that city in a generation, was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles under Archbishop Jose Gomez, and the Institute for Guadalupan Studies in Mexico City, on Aug. 5 at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

2012: The Knights of Columbus shipped aid and funds to those in need in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, with more than $500,000 in funds donated.

2013: Knights and their families and guests gathered at “America’s Catholic Church” in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Knights Tower Carillon and to re-consecrate the Order to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

2013: A new K of C initiative provided funding for Boston Marathon bombing victims, helping amputees acquire prosthetic devices not covered by insurance.

2013: Following the destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Knights of Columbus in the Visayas jurisdiction delivered food, water and other necessities during a relief operation and also establish a livelihood project to help those left jobless after the storm.

2014: The Knights of Columbus Christian Refugee Relief initiative stands at more than $2 million in public donations and Order-raised funds, which are distributed to support humanitarian assistance to refugees fleeing persecution in Iraq and the surrounding areas.

2014: The Knights of Columbus donates an ultrasound machine to a Baltimore pregnancy center, making it the: 500th such gift by the Order.

2015: The Guadium et Spes Award, the Order’s highest honor, was presented to Cardinal Francis George, the 11th recipient of the award since its establishment in 1992.

2015: The Knights of Columbus provided $400,000 to the Ukrainian-rite and Latin-rite Catholic communities of Ukraine. The funds were used for humanitarian relief, including projects that fed and aided homeless children and refugees living on the streets of the capital city of Kyiv.
2015: The Knights of Columbus Asset Advisors announced the creation of four faith-based investment solutions specifically designed to meet the needs of Catholic institutions.

2015: In July, the Knights of Columbus began the Christians at Risk national campaign that raises funds and fosters awareness of the persecution of religious minorities in the Middle East.

2015: Supreme Knight Carl Anderson presented charters for St. Andrew Kim Daegun Council 16000 and St. Paul Chong Hasang Council 16178 in Seoul, South Korea, on April 18. Named for 19th-century Korean martyrs, these are the first councils instituted in Korea outside a military base and the first on the mainland of Asia.

2015: The Order funded the delivery of one month’s supply of food to more than 13,500 Iraqi Christians as part of its multimillion dollar initiative to aid displaced Christian families and other persecuted religious communities in the Middle East.

2015: The Knights of Columbus surpassed $100 billion of life insurance in force, highlighting the fraternal benefit society’s mission to protect Catholic families.

2016: The Knights of Columbus applauded the U.S. State Department’s March 17 declaration that Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East face genocide at the hands of ISIS. The Knights was credited for its effort in pressing for this declaration, particularly through the: preparation of a 300-page report containing information regarding the dangerous, genocidal conditions in the Middle East.

2016: The Order’s highest honor, the Guadium et Spes Award, was presented to the Little Sisters of the Poor for their witness to the Gospel and their defense of religious liberty. The community was the 12th recipient of the award since its establishment in 1992.

2016: Ukraine, the Order’s newest territory, has nearly 600 members in 13 councils. The Knights of Columbus also takes root in France and Lithuania.
2017: The Knights of Columbus contributes nearly $2 million to various aid programs in the Middle East that have received little to no funding from the U.S. government or international community since ISIS began its genocidal campaign against the region’s religious minorities in 2014.

2019: The Ultrasound Initiative reaches over 1000 machines donated to pregnancy centers.

2019: School shooting hero Kendrick Castillo is posthumously made a Knight at the Supreme Convention in Minneapolis, Minn.