St. Stephen Council Supports Special Olympics Event

All activities of Council 14084 are suspended at this time
KNIGHTLY NEWS - A Monthly Publication for the Membership of St. Stephen Council 14084
Giving alms has always been an important part of Lent. The concept of almsgiving goes much deeper. It is our response to the teachings of Jesus that encourage us to reach out to people in need—not just with our money—but with our time and our talents. Today we might call it ‘stewardship.’

Lent gives us the opportunity to cultivate a spirit of generosity. It gives us a chance to share what we have and who we are with other people. It puts us in communion with others and helps us understand that we are all members of the Body of Christ. Think carefully about how you will share your time, your talents and your treasure during Lent. Keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Our Family of the Month is well known to our Council and the St. Stephen community. Julio Alvarez and his wife Emily serve our parish in so many ways. Julio is a former Grand Knight of this Council, former District Deputy, serves on our parish council and leads the ministry of Altar Servers at St. Stephen.

Of course, we owe Julio our gratitude for the hundreds of hours each year leading our fundraising efforts at Raymond James Stadium. We are better as a Council, and much richer as a community, for all Julio and Emily do for so many causes. Please join me in congratulating Julio.

Our Knight of the Month is Nick Turco. Nick serves our parish on the pastoral council, serves our Council as Financial Secretary and serves Assembly 3418. I know personally the amount of time and effort required for those forms, reports and spreadsheets. Thank you Nick for what you do!

Addendum March 16, 2020

We need to pray for each other. Pray to heal those who are sick with the virus. Pray that they regain their strength and health. Jesus, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty.

Whether terror or tragedy, acts of nature or man, times of need have proven over and over to bring out the best in us.

Even in the worst of times, our mutual support and personal kindness — no matter how small — makes all the difference.

We depend on each other. We band together in true unity and fraternity. We are kind to one another demonstrating true charity. We are Catholic. Even more so in these extraordinary circumstances.

At the direction of the Supreme Knight (our national presiding officer) and consultation with our officers and the Family Ministry of the Knights of Columbus, I must inform you that all activities of Council 14084 are suspended at this time, including the Exemplification and Dinner/Social scheduled for March 21st.

My personal commitment to our brother Knights is to communicate clearly all known facts. I will do my best to keep you informed as our schedule of events and meetings becomes known.

It is my intention to hold a planning meeting “virtual” (electronic media) on Tuesday evening March 31st to discuss current situation with Council officers and directors. More information to follow on that meeting.

These are times of uncertainty in our country and community. I will end my report with a short prayer for healing of those afflicted:

O God who are the only source of health and healing, the spirit of calm and the central peace of this universe, grant to me such a consciousness of your indwelling and surrounding presence that I may permit you to give me health and strength and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
In his writings, Saint Paul reminds us that “we are ambassadors for Christ” (II Cor. 5:20). To be an ambassador is to stand in the place of another, to represent another person. From the very beginning of civilization, kings have had their ambassadors to speak on their behalf and to conduct the affairs of state in the name of the king. Even the President of the United States has ambassadors to carry out the mission of our Federal Republic.

But there’s something peculiar to the life of an ambassador: They are seldom remembered! For instance, how many ambassadors can you name? But, this fact also may be revealing, that an ambassador, of his or herself, is not as important as the one he/she represents.

So, it is with us! In Baptism we were incorporated into Christ; we were claimed by the sign of his Cross and we were anointed with the sacred chrism. Through the saving waters of baptismal death, we were granted special rights and privilege. We became Christians -- other Christs. By virtue of our baptism, we are ambassadors of Jesus, and have as our chief duty the challenging task of imploring everyone we meet to “be reconciled to God” (II Cor. 5:20).

On Ash Wednesday, we were signed with ash, beginning Lent, that serves three key purposes. First, they remind us of our own mortality. As such, they remind us that we’re not as important as we often like to think we are. The One who is important is the One who dies no more, the One who calls us his friends and his ambassadors.

Second, the ashes on our foreheads in the form of the Cross make our unique allegiance clear to those we meet. They point not to ourselves but to Him who died for us, and they serve as a silent call to reconciliation with God and with his people. As we are signed with the ashes, we pray for the grace to conform our lives ever more closely to the will of God, even though it often means setting our own will aside.

Third, the ashes remind us that if we are to be faithful and effective ambassadors of Christ, our lives must reflect his life. We remember that our life – marked by our sins and our sinful desires – does not always look like the life of the Lord, in that we are not the clear reflections of his love that we should be. For this reason, we rend our hearts before the Lord so that he might wash us clean and become the righteousness of God in Him.

In these remaining days of Lent, we should strive with greater fervor and devotion, through our acts of penance and our increased prayer, fasting and alms-giving, to seek to model our lives on Christ Crucified. If we imitate Him and strive for the perfection that comes from the love of God and our neighbor, we will be found worthy ambassadors of Him who is both just and merciful.

**DO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE BAHAMAS?**

From July 18 to the 26th, Knights of Columbus of Florida are invited to join the Florida State Deputy and myself and several other Knights in a mission trip to the battered and beleaguered Bahamas to help our brother Knights rebuild some of the structures of the Archdiocese of Nassau that were lost in the devastation caused last year by hurricane Dorian.

Brother Knight, Archbishop Patrick Pinder reports that two schools, including one for “special needs children,” were destroyed in the storm, along with a church. Another church was severely damaged and barely stands, serving as a shelter for a few hundred people who lost everything they owned.

The cost will be kept below $300, but you MUST contact me via e-mail by April 1st, if you are willing to go and do manual labor in helping to restore the buildings. My e-mail is: frtom@bellsouth.net.
One of the shortest verses in the Bible — “And Jesus wept.” — is among the most powerful. The Son of God who became man mourns the loss of his friend. And he weeps, just as you or I would. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted,” Jesus said. Here he models his own teaching. In our busy day-to-day lives, we may be in danger of skipping this beatitude. And though many of the psalms are laments, we can be good at skimming them. Instead, may we follow Jesus by praying these psalms and mourning the losses we and others have suffered.

**Challenge by Supreme Chaplain Archbishop William E. Lori:**

This month, I challenge you to request a Mass for the repose of the soul of a recently deceased person. Second, I challenge you to support those who mourn by participating in the Faith in Action Christian Refugee Relief program or individually through prayer or other aid for those who have suffered persecution for their faith.

**Questions for Reflection:**

How can we properly mourn the losses we and others have suffered in life? How does having Masses said for the deceased aid not only them, but also those still alive? With so much suffering in the world, how can we best show compassion for others?

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**Prayer for the Canonization of Father Michael J. McGivney**

God, our Father, protector of the poor and defender of the widow and orphan, you called your priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, to be an apostle of Christian family life and to lead the young to the generous service of their neighbor.

Through the example of His life and virtue may we follow your Son, Jesus Christ, more closely, fulfilling His commandment of charity and building up His Body which is the Church.

Let the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence in your love so that we may continue His work of caring for the needy and the outcast. We humbly ask that you glorify your venerable servant Father Michael J. McGivney on earth according to the design of your holy will.

Through His intercession, grant the favor I now present (here make your request).

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
As a Council we support many great causes, but quite often we do not get to actually hear about or see the outcome of the support we provided. St Stephen’s Council has actively supported Scouting, especially the many young men in their quest to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. These young leaders spend many years in Scouting and in their pursuit to achieve that coveted rank of Eagle Scout, they must complete their Eagle Scout Service Project.

My son Nicholas Bambach started his journey in scouting as Tiger Cub Scout at St Stephen 11 years ago. This past December he stood before our Council as a young man, to present his project and ask for our generous support. The project entailed the construction of a prayer garden at Mary Help of Christians Center in Tampa. The Church expressed that they wanted the garden to be a peaceful place for people to sit and reflect.

The garden consisted of 20ft x 10ft cross built of heavy pavers inside a mulch garden. The cross also had a small circle around the center with native Florida plants on the inside. In the center of the cross a statue provided by the Church will be placed, which will be the focal point of the garden. Solar lights around the perimeter enable access to the garden at night. The garden is located by the main drive, so people visiting will have a direct view of it from the road and is also easily accessible by the retired priests who live in a house adjacent to the field.

It took my son over a year from concept to completion of the project, but he wanted his project to reflect his Catholic faith and the great work the Lord is doing through him. All this would not have been possible without the tremendous support and generosity provided by Brother Alec Brophy (Scoutmaster), St Stephen KofC Council 14084, Mary Help of Christians as beneficiaries, Lowes and especially the young men (many of them active in ministries at St Stephen) who spend two weekends helping my son built the prayer garden.

After the completion of a few more requirements, my son will be ready to stand in front of an Eagle Court of Honor, where he hopefully will be joining a small percentage of scouts who are honored with the rank of Eagle Scout. I hope many of my Brother Knights can join us when this honor is bestowed on him and witness the difference the Knights of Columbus has made in the life of a young man.
The original meaning of Lent was *ver sacrum*, holy spring. The cross of ashes traced on your forehead on Wednesday is not only a reminder that you are dust and to dust you shall return, but it is also a pledge of resurrection. Dust is not all there is to say about death.

We believe in the resurrection of the body and so, in a way known only to God, even our bodies will be redeemed in the next life. Lent is a time to repent and believe more deeply in the Gospel. It is ironic that when we receive ashes, the gospel assigned that day tells us to wash our faces and not look gloomy when we fast.

Our penances are not for show; they are practices by which we hope to deepen our spiritual lives both by confessing our sins and also by changing our bad habits. As Thomas Merton wrote, “It is a day, we shall see, in which joy and grief go together hand in hand: for that is the meaning of compunction—a sorrow which pierces, which liberates, which gives hope and therefore joy.”

Lent can be a time of casting out what cannot remain in the same room as mercy, casting out what impedes our way to reconciliation with those we are on bad terms with, casting out attitudes that cloud our minds with selfish desires and obsessing over what is not really that important in the long run, casting out the boredom and indifference that can creep into our daily lives.

God’s grace is rich during the season of Lent. We find healing in its silences. It is possible that we will recognize the sins we have not been fully aware of before, or grow in the grace of being in God’s presence without always asking for something from him.

In keeping with Pope Francis’ call for all of us to increase our knowledge of and devotion to the Sacred Scriptures, you might want to follow the readings that the Church has designated for each day of Lent. To find them, there are a number of Apps for that; I use IMissal. After reading the readings for a particular day, you might ask yourself: What in those readings most sounded like something I need to hear?

Lent lasts now forty days in keeping with the example of Jesus who went into the desert for forty days to prepare for the start of his ministry, and part of that was combating the power of the Devil. Since we live in an increasingly secular society, let’s not let Lent slip by us as we drive to work, as we complete our normal chores, as we pay our taxes, shop for groceries and do the other stuff that demands our attention. For forty days, let us be a community of penitents, a community of those praying every day, alone and together, of those living a different life from what we usually live. God will notice.

**Msgr. Mike**

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Did you know that the State of Florida Council has a YouTube Channel? Well, we do! This is a place where we can put in videos of the all the great things that we do as Knights in the State of Florida.

During the State Convention we took video interviews of some of the Dignitaries that honored us with their presence. You can see the videos by Clicking Here. Please be sure to subscribe to the channel so you will be notified when new videos are added. If you have any videos that you would like to add that shows your Council doing good works please email Jim Clark, Broadcast Media Relations and Production Director at jclark1@gmail.com.
Altar Server Appreciation
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Fraternal Year 2019-2020

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Deputy Grand Knight
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S/K Julio Alvarez, Jr.
S/K Pete Card

Faithful Inner Sentinel
S/K Dave Furrugia

Faithful Outer Sentinel
S/K Dave Furrugia

Color Corps Commander
S/K Rick Gnatowsky

MARCH BIRTHDAYS
Samuel Ross, Frank Hannington, Christopher Klein, Carl Belanger, Louis Maloni, G. Swetnam, John Laughman, Jerry Mohr, Stephen Powell, Daniel Noyes, Scott Huetteman, Richard Hughes, Robert Kines, Edward Veronick, Keith Remson, Christopher Lewis, Christopher Ross, Felix Perez, John Kulesa, Mark Beyers, Allen Rios, Bryan Maikowski, Conal Murphy, James Mayberrie, Jonathan Smith
The Father Michael J. McGivney Guild serves as a source for information about the life, works and spirituality of Father McGivney.

The Guild distributes informational materials about him, receives reports of favors granted through his intercession and oversees the distribution of relics.

Guild members receive regular updates on the progress of Father McGivney’s cause for canonization and are invited to participate in promoting devotion to this Servant of God. Members of the Knights of Columbus are not automatically Guild members and must elect to join the Guild.

The Father Michael J. McGivney Guild Newsletter is published bimonthly except July-August, and is sent free to Guild members.

To join the Guild, register online at: http://www.fathermcgivney.org/