

## Opening Prayer

**Presiding Officer** – Reverend Father, my Brother Knights, ladies, and friends. Welcome to this Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. Let us stand and begin with prayer.

**Presiding Officer** – Please be seated. By founding the Knights of Columbus in 1882, Father Michael McGivney sought to establish a fraternal Order whose members live the Christian virtues by means of the principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity. He sought to unite members in their Catholic identity as practical Catholics, that is, as Catholics who accept the teaching authority of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, who aspire to live in accordance with the precepts of the Catholic Church, and who are in good standing in the Catholic Church.

By your presence here today, you pledge that this is your understanding and intention in joining the Knights of Columbus.

At the time of our founding, Catholics in America faced discrimination and bigotry. Many immigrants were challenged by a hostile society that considered them outsiders and incapable of full citizenship. Often these Catholics were tempted to abandon their faith and the Sacraments.

The father was the family's primary wage earner and, with no social support network available, frequently his untimely death was a catastrophic event. His widow and children faced financial ruin and the breakup of their family. Removed from their family's home, children often found themselves removed from their family's faith.

Yet in the face of these challenges, Father McGivney was determined to find a way to strengthen the faith and families of his fellow Catholics.

Father McGivney's vision established our organization of local councils whose members sought to strengthen their faith, to serve the needs of others, and to protect their families through our insurance program.

The first members of our Order chose the name Columbus to emphasize that from the earliest days of the European exploration of America, Catholics had played an essential role. Christopher Columbus was a revered hero in the 19th century who inspired the names of cities throughout the United States, including the nation's capital, as well as a province in Canada and a nation in Latin America.

Those early Knights recognized Christopher Columbus, not only as an explorer of extraordinary skill and daring, but as a layman committed to bringing the Good News of the Gospel to a New World.

Our founding members chose to be called knights in recognition of the historic mission of Christian knights — men who led lives of virtue, defended the Faith, and served those in need.

In medieval times, when Christian knights took up arms and put on their armor, they understood that they were putting on the armor of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in order to serve a higher calling. A knight was committed to the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. He was willing to sacrifice himself for others, especially the poor and the vulnerable.

Although times have changed, this higher calling has not. Today, we do not put on armor made by fire and forge, but we are still called to put on the armor of Christ.

We are called, as St. Paul tells us, to stand firm, with integrity as a breastplate, carrying the shield of faith, wearing salvation as a helmet, and carrying the Word of God as a sword.

Our Church is still in need of men dedicated to this mission, men willing to be the strong right arm of the Church.

The Knights of Columbus is a brotherhood in service to the Catholic Church, bound together by our principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity. For Knights of Columbus, these principles find their origin and meaning in the Holy Eucharist. United to Christ in the Eucharist, we go forth seeing Christ in each other and in those we serve.

Listen now to the lesson on Charity.

**Presiding Officer** – Charity is our authentic witness to God through our good works. Charity is stronger and a greater service to the community when we are united.

Listen now to the lesson on Unity.

**Presiding Officer** – Long ago, Father McGivney proposed an ideal model of unity for the Catholic men of his parish. He envisioned a fraternal brotherhood — Catholic men supporting each other and their families, united in Christ and building up His body. His vision continues today as his Order works to strengthen Catholic families and parishes.

Listen now to the lesson on Fraternity.

**Presiding Officer** – You have heard that the virtue of Charity is the guiding principle of our Order. You have heard that there is strength when men work in Unity for a common cause. You have heard that Fraternity is an abiding fellowship with Christ and with your brother Knights.

As Catholics, we know that death does not have the final word! Our fraternal greeting is “*Vivat Jesus!*” which means “May Jesus Live!” With this greeting we recognize one another as brother Knights and we profess the hope by which we are saved.

*Pause.*

**Presiding Officer** – The perpetual watchword of our Order is “*Tempus Fugit. Memento Mori.*” which means “Time flies. Remember death.” We must remain vigilant, for we know not the day, nor the hour, when we will be called to give an account of our life. We must prepare for our death spiritually. And it is our duty to protect those who have been entrusted to our care by God — to be good stewards and to safeguard their future. The financial protection of our families remains fundamental to Father McGivney’s vision and the mission of the Knights of Columbus.

**Presiding Officer** – To profess your commitment to our principles, I now ask our candidates and all the brother Knights here present to rise.

*Candidates and all brother Knights stand.*

Candidates and brother Knights, raise your right hand and respond “I do” to the following questions.

*Candidates and all brother Knights raise their right hands.*

**Presiding Officer** – Do you promise to conduct yourself as a Catholic gentleman, and to live your life guided by the principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity?

**Gentlemen** – I do.

**Presiding Officer** – As a practical Catholic, do you promise to continue to form yourself in the Catholic Faith, to live in accord with the Precepts of the Catholic Church, and to participate in its sacramental life, especially through attendance at Sunday Mass?

**Gentlemen** – I do.

**Presiding Officer** – Do you promise to promote the well-being of your brother Knights, and to support the mission and activities of your council?

**Gentlemen** – I do.

**Presiding Officer** – Having reviewed and signed the Constitutional Roll, do you promise to obey the laws, rules and lawful authority of the Order?

**Gentlemen – I do.**

**Presiding Officer** – Gentlemen, your promises are hereby accepted.  
Please lower your hand and be seated.

Let us now invoke the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Warden will now escort the candidates forward.

*The Warden brings the candidates forward and arranges them around the perimeter of the Sanctuary. The Investing Officer(s) and candidates bow to the altar.*

**Presiding Officer** – Gentlemen, please present your hands *[he demonstrates]* joined as if in prayer, and turn to face the audience to receive the Rosary of Mary our Queen.

*The candidates turn to receive the rosaries and lapel pins.*

*Invest each candidate with a rosary, using these words.*

**Investing Officer(s)** – *Carry it always and pray it as often as you can.*

**Presiding Officer** – Gentlemen, you will now receive the Emblem of the Order.

My Brother Knights: we welcome you as Third Degree members of our Order, with all the responsibilities, rights and privileges accruing thereto.

You may place your rosary in your pocket and return to your seat.

*The Warden leads the newly invested Knights back to their places.*

**Presiding Officer** – Brother Knights, remember that the saints did not conquer nations by the sword but by prayer and good works. Members of our Order have been raised to the honors of the altar as saints and blessed. The world continues to need saints.

And the Knights of Columbus offers each of us, today, the opportunity to live a life of heroic virtue, through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

We have witnessed the promises you have made here today. Let them challenge you to live your life from this day forward holding fast to our principles of Charity, Unity, and Fraternity, so that on the last day your souls, filled with happiness, may enjoy the reward of a life well spent — an eternity in the presence of God Himself.

Everyone please stand for the Closing Prayer.

