



Chaplains Gather in Order's Birthplace

Former Associate State Chaplain Fr. Richard Mehm represented Mass. State Chaplain Bishop Daniel Reilly and Assoc. State Chaplain Fr. Robert Kickham at the New Haven Meeting

The Knights of Columbus and its leadership are committed to making the Order and its members participants in the great renewal of the Catholic Church, Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson told the 66 chaplains from 58 jurisdictions – including five bishops from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico – gathered in New Haven for the first-ever State Chaplains Meeting, March 1-4th.

“We (as Knights) must embrace the renewal being carried out in the Catholic Church, and extend and promote that renewal,” the supreme knight said. The Order, he continued, needs to be more than a gathering space and a way for Catholic men to get together. The Knights of Columbus also needs to be a conduit through which its members can become better husbands, fathers, workers, citizens, and patriots, grounded in principles of the Order – charity, unity and fraternity. The Knights of Columbus needs to be not just a monthly meeting, but a way of life that forms its members to be better Catholics.

Chaplains, from the state level down the council chaplains, are the key to that formation, he added. “My thanks to all of you for making time to be with us ... It is a great joy for

me that one of the most important initiatives that our Order has undertaken in the past ten years is to have a great formative role for our chaplains in the Knights of Columbus and the tremendous response by you to that call.”

Supreme Knight Anderson also spoke on the need for a strong relationship between the clergy and laity, and how such a relationship will in turn strengthen the parishes in which the Order is present. “We will keep our Church strong through parish-based councils. These councils and their members will keep the parishes active and healthy, the laity united with pastors and priests.”

Supreme Chaplain Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn. reflected on a similar theme, saying “Father McGivney understood that we live the one Faith in mutual support, and every state of life (be it clergy or laity) has a vital role to play. The better we live our lives through our priesthood, the stronger our members and families will be ... the better the laity lives its faith, the stronger the clergy will be.”

“When I arrived here in New Haven almost two years ago, I was able to attend the orientation meeting conducted for the state deputies,” Father Grace noted. “It was comprehensive and I was impressed. However, the thought did occur to me: ‘why is something similar not being done for the state chaplains?’ Our supreme knight and supreme chaplain have answered that question now by calling this first of its kind chaplains meeting here in the very town where a priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, founded our beloved Order. ”

Some of the discussion topics on the docket for the week are the four principles of the Knights of Columbus and their spiritual aspect, a sharing of ideas, promotion of fellowship, an intellectual understanding of the faith, and keys to success as a Knights of Columbus chaplain.

Chaplains Stress Solidarity

Comments from the chaplains during the three-day meeting have been positive, as they develop ways for chaplains to be more effective on the state and local levels.

“Highly organized and very informative,” Father Alfred Camp, state chaplain of Mississippi, said about the gathering. “The interaction among the priests has been great. I think we are all getting a better sense of who we are as chaplains of the Knights of Columbus, and how to work better with or local chaplains and councils.”

Father James Brown, Ohio state chaplain, said that he appreciated the Knights’ concern for them as priests and the Order’s efforts to give chaplains the tools necessary to do their jobs better. He went on the K of C pilgrimage to Rome last year for the conclusion of the Year for Priests, and now sees all the Order’s efforts coming together.

“The Knights’ commitment to the chaplains is growing,” Father Brown said. “It’s awesome to see the enthusiasm of my brother priests and chaplains. We have come together from all over the world and we are working together.”

Father James Caldwell, has been Oklahoma state chaplain for four years, yet he said, “I’m learning more and more every day.” He said the spirit and enthusiasm at the meeting will encourage him to reach out even more to the chaplains in his state.

“I want to convey the need for us to be more unified as priest chaplains in the state,” he said, “and also convey what it means for us to be part of the local councils, working with the Knights on a daily basis.”

10-Step Program For Chaplains From Supreme Meeting

The chaplains were given a roadmap to success on Thursday morning when Father John Grace, O.S.A., presented a new pamphlet called “10 Keys to Success for Chaplains.”

Director of Chaplain Program & Development, Father Grace said that if chaplains followed the 10 points, there would be a growth in spiritual development within the Order, and many more men would be attracted to join.

The points are:

- 1. Nourish the special role of the Knights of Columbus as a lay fraternal organization within the Church.** Stress and support the fact that Knights take pride in working as the “strong right arm of the Church” and of the parish.
- 2. Acquire a working knowledge of the Order’s operations on all levels.** This includes being present at all state and local council meetings; reading *Columbia* magazine, which contains a monthly column by Supreme Chaplain Bishop William Lori, and consulting the monthly Chaplains Report and the Order’s website.
- 3. Involve council members in sacraments and prayer.** Promote the Eucharist and Mass attendance, instruct them in the faith to deepen their understanding, urge them to pray the rosary, and promote vocations to priesthood and religious life.
- 4. Promote devotion to Father Michael McGivney.** The founder of the Order, a holy parish priest who was named “Venerable” in 2008, should be the model for all K of C chaplains. Join the Father McGivney Guild and have all council members join, to support beatification of Father McGivney. Read the biography Parish Priest, which relates the life and times of Father McGivney.

5. Provide catechesis on faith and morals. Let members know what is demanded of them to be practicing Catholics in the 21st century, when so much of the culture has turned secular.

6. Lead by example and effective teaching. Be a spiritual leader who calls Knights to a higher level of devotion and dedication to the Catholic faith.

7. Tend to Knights of Columbus families. The Order is not only a men's organization. The Knights is a family organization that was founded to care for wives and children. Be a friend, teacher and sanctifier of the family, showing up when called and being there in times of joy, sorrow and grief.

8. Work in collaboration with local, state and supreme councils. Use the resource materials provided and keep lines of communication open.

9. Attend council meetings. Don't look at council meetings as a chore to be endured, but as an exciting opportunity to instruct and sanctify the members and lead them in a life of faith in action.

10. Reinforce pro-life activities. Join the Order in building a Culture of Life and a Civilization of Love by supporting and enhancing a pro-life mentality, from conception to natural death.