

“A NEW BEGINNING”

How often do we wish for another chance
To make a fresh beginning,
A chance to blot out our mistakes
And change failure into winning?

And it does not take a new year
to make a brand new start,
It only takes the deep desire
to try with all our heart.

Worthy Grand Knight:

These words symbolize for us the meaning of retention. Many times we have wished for a second chance to bring back into the fold a brother who left after an argument, who did not agree with current policies, or who was offended in some way. Do not wait any longer, call him up and ask him to come back. Many times that is all that is needed, the personal touch, a few minutes of your time. All it takes is the desire to try to bring him back, to try with all your heart.

The words, CHARITY, UNITY, FRATERNITY and PATRIOTISM are the keystones of our order. Do we have CHARITY when we allow a brother to drop out without trying to save him? Do we show UNITY when we allow our ranks to be decimated by the loss of brothers who perhaps needed only a kind word or a thoughtful deed to retain their membership? Is FRATERNITY uppermost in our minds when we allow a brother to slip through the council net and lose him to the secular world? Do we allow our brothers to sit at home rather than inviting them to join us in a parade, marching behind our colors? Is that how we practice the virtue of PATRIOTISM?

What we need is active participation by the officers of the councils to wholeheartedly seek out the reasons for suspension and rectify these problems. A Grand Knight CANNOT just appoint a retention committee and then forget it exists, he must take an active and visible role on this committee and see that everything possible is being done to stop suspensions and bring his council to its potential.

Tools that are needed for retention begin with a complete working knowledge of the benefits that are available to members of the Knights of Columbus. In Massachusetts, our Blood Program is second to none, not only is a member covered but his family as well. This is an enviable program which more than compensates our dues monies should a crisis arise. The number for our blood Program is 11112, please use this number when you are donating or requesting blood.

There is also a fraternal/spouse death benefit program offered at no cost by the Supreme Council. Under this program, each member is good standing, in a council in good standing, and his spouse are covered for up to \$2,500.00 for a death that occurs within 90 days as a result of an injury sustained in a covered accident.

Educational benefits that are available to members in good standing are the Scholarship/Fellowship program that contains six different college scholarship programs for members and their families; three different graduate fellowship programs, and scholarship programs for seminarians. The Matthews and Swift Educational Trust Fund provides scholarships to Catholic Colleges for children of a member killed or permanently and totally disabled from military service in armed conflict, or from criminal violence while performing duties as a full time law enforcement officer or full time firefighter. Another program that is well worth the cost of our dues is the student loan program. The amounts and terms of repayment are better than a bank and are an indicator of our Order's interest in the family.

Familiarize yourself with these and other programs and actively pursue former members and bring them back into the "fold of Columbianism."

Good Luck and may God continue to bless your effort.

Fraternally,



Paul A. Flanagan
State Deputy