

GRAND KNIGHTS MESSAGE: KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FATHER BREEN COUNCIL 7490

My name is John Enders, and I have been a member of this parish for about 31 years. I've have the honor of being a member of the Fr. Breen Council #7490 Knights of Columbus for about 30 years, having served in many capacities, including Grand Knight twice. I've had the privilege of serving on some of the most successful committees, including fund raisers. There were times when many of us would stand outside the market selling chances for a door prize or in the VFW parking lot selling Christmas trees so we could brighten the holidays for someone in need, and I'm happy to say we do. Whether we delivered turkeys for Thanksgiving or Holiday baskets for the needy we provided support for our community. That's one of the platforms by which the Knights exist: by deeds of charity, unity and fraternity. When the Knights were established 132 years ago by a humble parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, the venerable Fr. Michael J. McGivney. His vision was to help people and provide a "Fraternal Benefit Society" so that the Knights would be able to also care for the widows and children of deceased members. Little did Father McGivney realize that the order would grow to one of the highest rated Catholic organizations in the world, spreading charity in some of the most remote regions of the planet, as well as right here at home in our backyard.

The Knights have been instrumental in supplying coats for the unfortunate in the winter, wheelchairs for veterans at the VA hospital in Montrose and right here in Sacred Heart we have supported seminarians, provided tokens of our appreciation for our altar servers, birthright and other organizations, within the parish. We are not here to compete with other church organizations, and will support them in all they do. Here in Sacred Heart thanks to Knights like Larry Don Francisco the grounds are well maintained and minor repairs are made. Larry does it because he's a Knight. And, this 14 acre property is meticulous, and should be in a magazine. Larry and Doug do all of this for virtually no money, and for the most part are simply reimbursed for their expenses.

One of the leading scholars of the 20th century, taught his students at Harvard Business School that it was a waste of time to read the stock pages and headlines in the New York Times. Instead, he said read the obituaries and nothing else. Why? Because, those are the real people who contribute to mankind, not movie stars or gangsters, but ordinary people like you and me. From medicine to science, or even someone who donated their time to make a difference in someone else's life whether from a philanthropic standpoint or just a mailman who donated his time to hospice, to help someone in the final moments of their life. He said that those people were the real celebrities in society, those who help others. After all, even Jesus said we are all born with "talents," and those "talents," can range from being the new singing sensation or just someone who has a "talent," to help. Will someone like Larry or Doug make the front page of the NY Times when their time has come? No. But, their contributions to us can't be measured in celebrity. And, God will not let you into heaven on celebrity status and have been on TMZ.

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Here at the Knights of Columbus council #7490, we come from various different walks of life, ethnic persuasions, and generations. We each have our own “talent,” which we contribute not only as Knights, but as people. Even in attendance at mass today we may have firefighters from the Putnam Lake or Patterson Fire Department. They may have saved a life last night but you’ll never know because they don’t seek the limelight. They’re just like you and me, parishioners at a small country church located about 55 miles from New York City. As a parish community we are facing one of the hardest times in our Catholic life and the prospect that a small group of people may decide to fate of this parish scares me and should scare you as well.

The Knights of Columbus, along with our sister organization the Catholic Daughters of America will survive regardless of what happens. Why? Because we are separate church organizations and are in charge of our own fate. Even if, God forbid we get evicted we’ll find somewhere else to meet, and continue with our charity work, regardless of the inner workings of church politics here at Sacred Heart.

The real reason for my speaking tonight/today is to appeal to those brothers who are Knights and have drifted away from the council, for whatever reason. Again, there is nothing more important than unity. One question often posed in surveys is: If you’re about to die would you want to be in a hospital or a church? Think about that. We would like those members to return and help finish what they started by contributing some time or “talent.”

For those of you young men who would like to become Knights, and make a difference the annual fees are \$30, but the benefits are enormous. We meet the third Friday of each month right downstairs and the more the Catholic men of this parish stick together, the better it will be for all. I promise.

For those of you interested we have some handouts or you can see one of the Knights, after mass. Remember, this is not a big commitment and it’s not for me but for the parish of Sacred Heart Church. Thank you for your time and may God bless each one of you.