

State of the Jurisdiction Address 2020

Worthy State Chaplain, Worthy Supreme Advocate, Worthy Supreme Representative, Worthy Former Supreme Warden, Worthy Past State Deputies, Worthy State Officers, Worthy District Deputies, Program Personnel, Delegates and my Brother Knights:

It is my pleasure to welcome you and your families to the 117th Annual Kentucky State Convention.

It is my duty and honor to present you with the “State of the Jurisdiction”. Over the next few minutes I will give you an overview of what we have done this year and outline our plans for the future.

The Kentucky jurisdiction is made up of 24 active districts and 108 councils. Of these 108 councils, 7 are considered inactive by either Supreme and/or the State Council. As of today, the Kentucky jurisdiction has a membership of over 12,100 brother knights.

We have:

25 councils in the Archdiocese of Louisville,
14 councils in the Diocese of Covington,
26 councils in the Diocese of Lexington,
and 38 councils in Diocese of Owensboro.

And we have several councils that have achieved significant milestones this year.

5 Year Anniversary:

Knottsville Council #16125 in Knottsville
Sts. Brigid & James Council #16179 in Louisville
Christ the King Council #16232 in Scottsville

10 Year Anniversary:

St. Francis of Assisi Council #15065 in Pikeville
Blessed Trinity Council #14181 in Princeton/Dawson Springs
St. Timothy Council #15211 in Union

25 Year Anniversary:

Knights of Sts. John & Francis Council #11470 in Georgetown

Divine Mercy Council #11591 in Paducah

110 Year Anniversary:

Frankfort Council #1483 in Frankfort

Ashland Council #1487 in Ashland

115 Year Anniversary:

Fr. Durbin #1004 in Morganfield

Congratulations on these significant anniversaries. We look forward to celebrating many more years with all our councils. Take a moment and think about that 115 year history. Imagine how much our lives have changed in the last 115 years. And through all that change one thing has remained constant, the Knights of Columbus has had a strong presence in Kentucky that whole time.

This year we are fortunate to have formed a new council Covington. When District Deputy David White found out that Father Michael Hennigen was going to be appointed pastor of Holy Cross Parish he immediately contacted me to let me know of a new council possibility. Fr. Michael was an active 4th degree member of council 5453 in Burlington and was excited about the idea of starting a Knights of Columbus council in his new parish. Through David's hard work and the assistance of others in the area, they started the Bishop Maes Holy Cross Council #17445 early in this fraternal year. David didn't stop there. Using the new Charity, Unity, and Fraternity Degree, he made sure that every member of that council advanced to 3rd degree. With David's continued guidance, they will be a very successful and productive council going forward. David, thank you for all your hard work getting Council #17445 started.

At this point, Supreme is still tabulating the results of the Annual Survey from Councils and Assemblies for 2019, so I can only give you numbers for 2018. Worldwide, the Knights of Columbus donated over 185 Million (\$185,684,496) dollars and over 76.7 Million (76,774,155) hours of volunteer service.

Here in Kentucky, we did our part too. We donated over 1.3 million (\$1,303,658) dollars and over 300,000 (301,030) hours of volunteer service. That is a feat that we should all be very proud of.

The Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP for short) was established by Supreme to promote and encourage the Knights' support of the seminarians and other religious members of the church at a local level. For every seminarian the council provides with at least \$500, that council is reimbursed \$100 from Supreme.

This year, Kentucky has 39 seminarians and again this year, all 39 of the Kentucky Seminarians received support from the Kentucky councils and assemblies. Understanding that these young men will be our spiritual guides of the future, it is only logical that this should be a key effort for our local councils. Thanks to the all the Councils that provided this support. And thanks to RSVP Chairman Dan Pawley who did a wonderful job in gathering this information and insuring that all our seminarians were supported again this year.

As you know, the Supreme Council has a monetary matching program to help councils place lifesaving ultrasound machines in facilities where pregnant women will have an opportunity to see their unborn child in the womb and hopefully, they will then choose life. Kentucky has taken advantage of this program and placed 20 ultrasound machines throughout the state in the last several years. This year we placed two more ultrasound machines.

The first was delivered to the CARENET Pregnancy center in Florence in the Fall of 2019. This effort was led by Mary Queen of Heaven Council 14993 and is the 6th Ultrasound machine delivered by Northern Kentucky Knights. This is the second machine provided to the Florence Center, as the operation there is so busy, a single machine would no longer fill the need.

An ultrasound machine was also provided to the Assurance for Life Pregnancy center in Lexington. This effort was led by Sts. Francis & John Council 11470 in Georgetown. Thank you to both of these councils, and all councils who provided assistance. These machines are truly saving

lives. To date, Kentucky councils have provided 20 Ultrasound Machines at a value well over \$1 million!

So far this fraternal year, the Kentucky jurisdiction has brought in 286 new members into the order. We have lost 147 to suspensions, and 176 to deaths. We currently have 29 members less than we started the fraternal year with. We need to keep pushing forward in our race against Father Time. I will talk more about this in a bit.

The Knights of Columbus and the Special Olympics have had a great partnership from the very beginning, nationally as well as here in Kentucky. This year we stepped up our game here in Kentucky and we have donated over \$15,000 (\$15,351.27) to Special Olympics so far this fraternal year and we are not done yet.

Every year our councils setup food drives to help those with food insecurity. But this year was especially difficult for people due to the mass layoffs and our councils stepped up when the need arose. Not only did we donate food to the local food banks, but I know of at least two councils (and I know there are many more) that donated large sums of money to help the food banks buy extra food to help those that needed it. Charity is our first principal and our knights are shining examples of what it means to Leave No Neighbor Behind.

Every year we hold the free throw contest throughout the state that culminates with the state competition in March to crown the best shooters in Kentucky. This year, less than a week before the state contest was scheduled to take place, the coronavirus forced large gatherings to be put on hold and our State Free Throw Contest was no exception. At the time, we decided to postpone it until we could gather again safely. Since that time, the Supreme Council decided that there will not be an international contest this year. With the pandemic pushing toward the beginning of the next fraternal year, I have decided to cancel the State Free Throw Contest for this year. Congratulations goes out to all the local and district winners. Hopefully, most of them will get a chance to compete again next year.

One of the other Youth Programs held in our jurisdiction this year was The Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest. These are the winning

entries and we should be proud of both the quality of the artistry and the sincere messages these children included in their work. The winners were:

Age 5-7

1st place:	Anthony Colley	Council 15211
2nd place:	Natalie Eckels	Council 1320
3rd place:	Shelby Rigdon	Council 15841

Age 8-10

1st place:	Maria Bombelli	Council 15979
2nd place:	Charlie Henry	Council not listed
3rd place:	Ava Pennington	Council 12502

Age 11-14

1st Place:	Elizabeth Stevens	Council 7847
2nd place:	Patrick Hawke	Council 1320
3rd place:	Stefany Nix	Council 15211

Thank you, Joe Mezzoni and Keith Cahill, for working together on this program. Hopefully we can increase participation in this program in the coming years.

The Football Frenzy program was a success again this year. State-wide we sold a little over 3,000 (3,073) tickets and raised \$8,500 for Kentucky State Charities. This is the main fundraiser for our charitable arm, Knights of Columbus Charities of Kentucky. Kentucky Charities, as it is more commonly referred to, is a 501c3 company that is operated by the state council. Unlike a council, all donations to Kentucky Charities are tax deductible. All the money that is raised for Kentucky Charities gets donated to help others.

Kentucky Charities has given money to help build a playground for special needs children, sponsored a grant to help low income people get their taxes done for free, and donated to Catholic Cemeteries, and so many

other wonderful acts of charity. It is imperative that we continue to work hard with the Football Frenzy fundraiser each year to make sure that our charitable arm can continue to flex its muscle.

Through your efforts with the Basketball Slam program, over \$5,400 (\$5,426.25) was added to the Disaster Relief Fund this year. Some years, the fund goes unused and builds up for later use. That was not the case this year. The state council donated \$1,000 to District Deputy John Staudt to help him and his family when their home was completely destroyed by fire. And after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the state council donated \$2,500 to each of the four dioceses in Kentucky to assist them in their efforts to help those in need. We also purchased some supplies for the Saint Joseph Home, run by the Little Sisters of the Poor. In total, we have used \$13,500 of our disaster relief fund this year. Thank you for all your efforts that allow us to exemplify our first principal, Charity.

Thanks to our Worthy State Warden Dick Burns for all he has done with these two fundraising programs this past year.

Another means of support for our charitable work is the State Golf Outing headed up by the Vine Grove Council. The funds raised by this program are also used to fund Kentucky Charities. This past golf tournament raised \$367. Thank you to the Vine Grove Council for continuing to carry on this wonderful and fun tradition for another great year.

The Kentucky State Council is led by five State Officers in addition to the State Deputy. They are:

State Chaplain - Fr. Mario Tizziani of St. Cecilia Parish in Independence

State Secretary - Steve Zanone of Council 762 in Lexington

State Treasurer - Tom Johnson of Council 11470 in Georgetown

State Advocate - Luke Williams of Council 12923 in Campbellsville

State Warden - Dick Burns of Council 15979 in Louisville

We are also served by:

Immediate Past State Deputy - Gabe Cabral of Council 1315 in Bowling Green and,

Executive Secretary - Jim Wharton of Council 14372 in Lexington

I would like to personally thank all these men and their wives for the sacrifices they have made in order to benefit the Kentucky Jurisdiction this past year. I wish I could say that holding one of these positions only requires a small time-commitment, but that would be misleading. These positions require quite a bit of a man's time and sometimes the need must be addressed immediately instead of at your convenience. These men have stepped up each and every time. Thank you for everything that you do.

I would like to say a special thank you to Fr. Mario Tizziani. As you know, Fr. Mario is our State Chaplain. And as State Chaplain he has provided the State Council with spiritual guidance, Leadership, and prayer. And to me personally, Fr. Mario has been a great friend and sympathetic ear. Father's schedule with the Church has gotten even busier, but he always makes time for the Knights of Columbus. Thank you Fr. Mario, it has been a great honor having you serve as state chaplain these last two years.

The office of State Deputy is a big job. The responsibility for everything that goes on in the state ultimately falls on the man that holds this office. And there is no way that one man could do everything that needs to be done by himself, it's just not possible. Luckily, I have many men working with me to help us achieve our goals. At the beginning of my term, I appointed people to over 80 different positions to give us the best chance for success. I am not going to name them all now, but please know that I am grateful to each of you. Two men in particular deserve special recognition. Past State Deputies Billy Hancock and Bill Schmidt have both put forth an incredible amount of time and effort, this year and last, to ensure that the jurisdiction is as successful as it can be. Holding the positions of Membership Director and Program Director is no small feat and they have both done an exceptional job this year. Thank you both.

To initially join the Knights of Columbus is a fairly simple act, but to remain an active member for many years takes considerable effort. And to achieve 50 years of continuous service to the Knights of Columbus is an accomplishment to be proud of. I am happy to announce that we will honor 44 of our brother Knights who have achieved 50 years of continuous service to the Knights of Columbus this year with a resolution that will be

considered during this convention. These Brother Knights' dedication to the Order is certainly noteworthy and deserves this recognition.

In Kentucky we now have 108 councils throughout the state. The two furthestmost councils are over 400 miles apart. There is no way that I could attend all the council meetings every month. This is where the district deputies become invaluable. They attend all these meetings and act as my representative. I cannot thank you all enough for your efforts. Without you men, the flow of information from myself to the councils and back would be severely diminished. During this convention, we will be submitting a resolution honoring you and your commitment to the jurisdiction and the order.

Our District Deputies are: David Dean, Dennis Herricks, Ed Shoemaker, Ed Sullivan, Bruce Whitehouse, George Barber, Neil Scott, Gary Dykhuis, Jack Thomas, Dannie Harris, John Thomas, Greg Eiden, George Daniels, Joe Carter, John Staudt, Mickey Ward, Ed Louisignau, Steve O'Bryan, Jim Wharton, Ed Quinn, David White, Paul Motz, and Terry Tackett. Thank you gentlemen for all you have done for our jurisdiction.

Another one of our valuable resources is our Past State Deputies. We are blessed to have 16 living Past State Deputies in Kentucky. And many of them are still actively assisting the State Council in various ways. It is great to know that at any time I can call on any one of these men and ask for advice and they are all eager to help out as needed. Those 16 men held the office of State Deputy for a total of 32 years and held state officer positions for well over 60 years. That is an abundance of experience and I am grateful to you all for your willingness to guide me when asked. Unfortunately, Past State Deputy Robert Hood passed away just a few weeks ago. We will be honoring Bob's life and service to our Jurisdiction with a resolution to be considered during this convention.

Fr. McGivney started the Knights of Columbus to protect the widows and orphans of the Catholic men that were being oppressed at that time. His dream has evolved into something so wonderful that I wonder if he ever imagined that the Knights of Columbus would be able to protect so many families and do so much good for others. Nationally, the insurance side of the Knights of Columbus is the financial backbone of our order. The money that the insurance generates allows the Supreme Council to react

quickly when natural disasters strike, and to donate millions of dollars to the church every year. It also keeps our local dues low.

We are lucky to have this insurance to protect the families of our fallen brothers that had chosen to take advantage of this beneficial resource.

This year, Supreme reorganized the insurance side of the knights and Kentucky is now represented by General Agent Daniel Shackle. And we are very lucky to have Daniel and his team on our side. Daniel understands the hurdles that we face regarding insurance in Kentucky and he is working hard to hire more field agents so that we can properly service all 12,000 knights and their families here in our great state. Daniel is not only great for the insurance side; he is great for the fraternal side. He is truly a great partner in our quest to continue the legacy of Fr. Michael J. McGivney. Thank you Daniel for all your help.

The State Convention is an enormous undertaking and it requires a lot of time and effort to coordinate the various committees and pull together all the arrangements that go into making it a successful event. Steve O'Bryan and Ed Quinn are State Convention Co-Chairmen. And even though our convention is being conducted virtually this year, these two men had already done all the work and put everything in place before the pandemic forced us to change course. And I truly appreciate the work they have done.

As this fraternal year comes to a close, we need to be looking forward to next year and beyond. While we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, membership may be the last thing on our minds, but we cannot lose our focus. Membership is not about earning awards or reaching milestones, it is about preserving our legacy and continuing to carry out the vision of Fr. McGivney. As I mentioned earlier, we have had 172 men pass away so far this year. That is an average of 18 deaths per month. If we are to continue to carry out the vision of Fr. McGivney, we need to bring in new members. Not only to replace the men that are passing away, but also to offset our ageing membership.

Statewide, we have over 2,200 members that are 75 years old or older. Many of these men have been faithfully serving their councils for many years already and have earned the right to relax and let others do the

work. Let's honor these men by bringing in new members to lighten the load.

While membership is integral to the survival of the Knights of Columbus, it is not our most important task. We must continue to increase our knowledge of the Catholic religion and deepen our faith. We have a responsibility to continue to strive to be better men, better husbands, better fathers, and better Catholics. Hopefully, we all stay humble enough to know that there is always room for improvement.

A couple of years ago, the Supreme Council developed their new model, "Faith in Action" with a focus on increasing faith, both for the people we serve, and us, as we serve others. This new program model has been adopted by many of the councils throughout Kentucky, but several councils have resisted. Change is not always easy, but this new program is well done and helps us to work more closely with our priests.

To borrow a phrase from a few years ago, "What would Jesus do?" If Jesus was standing next to us disguised as a brother knight, would he want to join forces with the priests? Or would he say, "Let's keep doing things the same way we always have?" We must open ourselves up to new possibilities and not let our fear of the unknown keep us from doing the right thing. Now, more than ever, we need to step into the breach!

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to change the way we recruit new members. Asking a man to join the Knights of Columbus when you see him in church has always been a great way to recruit new members, but the fact that churches are holding Mass over the internet has made this an impossibility for the time being. But we cannot stop asking good men to join us, we just need to find different ways. So, think about those men you admire and call them and let them know why you love the Knights of Columbus. Don't tell him what the Knights could do for him, tell him what it has done for you. Then offer him the opportunity to join you. And follow that up immediately by giving him the details for the next online exemplification. Strike while the iron is hot!

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Supreme Council has adjusted the requirements for councils to earn the Star Council Award this year. The

membership intake quota has been lowered by 40% and the insurance quota has been cut in half. And any council that conducts an insurance benefit night and puts in the effort to do it correctly will meet the insurance requirement automatically.

The insurance quota has always been the major hurdle for councils trying to achieve star council and now this is an achievable goal for all councils even for Council #2761 in Louisville that started the year with an insurance quota of 11. A properly run insurance benefit night will satisfy that insurance requirement.

As I mentioned earlier, membership quotas have been lowered by 40%. That combined with the new online Charity, Unity, Fraternity Degree brings the councils' membership goals well within reach. Supreme also lowered the number of programs required on the SP-7 form from 16 down to 10 and for this year, there are no mandatory programs.

In reality, all of our councils can earn both the Columbian Award and the Founder's Award with just a little bit of effort. And the Father McGivney Award is much more attainable than it was just a few weeks ago. It is not too late for any and all of our 100 councils to earn the Star Council Award. Let's go make that happen.

It is our responsibility to ensure the legacy of our founder Fr. Michael J. McGivney and the COVID-19 pandemic does not change that. In fact, it highlights the need for us to get out there and help others. We must not let everyday distractions keep us from doing our part as we step into the breach and leave no neighbor behind.

It has been my honor to serve you all as State Deputy for the last two years. There have been good times and bad, simple days and difficult days, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I couldn't be any more proud of the Kentucky Jurisdiction than I am right now.

Vivat Jesus!
Cameron Peck
State Deputy