

# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

By Jerry Helgeson



In recent years Saint Mary's parishioners have heard the Knights of Columbus mentioned but we are sure many are wondering, "What is the Knights of Columbus?" Have you had the opportunity to eat at one of the delicious monthly breakfasts at Saint Mary's? How aware are you of this growing men's organization whose role is service to the Church, its members, and the community? This article is to tell the history and role of the Knight of Columbus. The Saint Mary's Council of the Knights of Columbus recently celebrated its tenth anniversary and continues to become more involved in the activities of our parish.

On October 2, 1881, a small group of men met in the basement of Saint Mary's Church on Hillhouse Avenue in New Haven, Connecticut. Called together by their 29-year-old parish priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, these men formed a fraternal society that would one day become the world's largest Catholic family fraternal service organization. They sought strength in solidarity, and security through unity of purpose and devotion to a holy cause. They vowed to be defenders of their country, their families and their faith.

These men were bound together by the ideal of Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of the Americas, the one whose hand brought Christianity to the New World. Their efforts came to fruition with the incorporation of the Knights of Columbus on March 29, 1882.

The Order has been called "the strong right arm of the Church," and has been praised by popes, presidents and other world leaders, for support of the Church, programs of evangelization and Catholic education, civic involvement and aid to those in need. Father McGivney's founding vision for the Order also included a life insurance program to provide for the widows and orphans of deceased members. The Order's insurance program has expanded substantially to serve more effectively the Knights' growing membership.

The Supreme Council is the governing body of the Knights of Columbus and is responsible for the development of the organization as a whole. Members working in local, or subordinate councils, carry on the majority of the Knights' beneficial work.

The Knights of Columbus has grown from several members in one council to more than 13,000 councils and 1.7 million members throughout the world. The Saint Mary's Council formed in August 1999 with a small number of members and has grown to over 60 members.

During the past decade, our council has supported, in different ways, activities of both the school and the church. Members of our council have also been involved in community events. Some of the activities the council has supported are parish picnics, crosses for the unborn (recognized by Time Magazine in 2003), basketball hoop shoot competitions, seminarians, scholarships, and the remodeling of the church. In addition, several members volunteer their time with the Corpus Christi House and with Saint Mary's Food Bank.

Recently, some members have been very instrumental in bringing Catholic radio to the Treasure Valley, having purchased KGEM at 1140 AM and KCID 1490 AM. A number of members are involved in the REEL men's group that meets each Friday morning at 6:30 a.m. in the parish Center.

**In the summer of 2007, in preparation for the remodeling of our Saint Mary's Church, the rectory was moved to a site on the corner of 27th and Pleasanton. Prior to that move, the original bricks (made in 1937) on the outside of that building were removed and turned over to the Knights. In addition, bricks from the church that were removed in the remodeling were added to that large total. During the past two years, many of these bricks have made their way to the homes or yards of parishioners, a memento of our 'older' church buildings.**

**What has this council done in support of Saint Mary's?**

- **Hosted coffee and donuts after Masses**
- **Provided ice cream socials**
- **Vocation awareness including financial support for our "adopted" seminarian. Cirilo Sanchez, currently studying for the Boise diocese**
- **Organizes Thanksgiving baskets for needy families**
- **Hosted annual basketball free throw contests for kids**
- **Donated flowers for the Mother's Day Masses**
- **Showed appreciation for our altar servers by providing an outing and lunch**
- **Provided spaghetti dinners and pancake breakfasts welcoming new parishioners**
- **Prepared food at the annual parish picnic**

**Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Monday of the month in the Parish Center. If you are 18 and older, please call Grand Knight, Roland Krueger, 336-1355, with your questions or if you would like to join.**