



# The Columbian Gazette

## Of Ashburn

VOL. 4 ISSUE 3 - SEPTEMBER, 2024

ASHBURN, VA

## A Message From Deacon Noah

Brother Knights,

As my wife and I prepare to move to Atlanta to support my son and his children, I'd like to exhort you all to strive to be the best fathers and husbands you can be. I assure you all, as I'm retired and past 63 years old, that if God were to give me a mulligan, I'd immediately apply it to being a better husband and father. Everything else that I've done is rapidly being put into its proper (and generally meaningless) perspective. The one exception of course is my call to be a Deacon, but it's the father and husband thing that was - and is - my primary vocation from God.

Be assured of my prayers that you will all fully and enthusiastically embrace your vocation from God, be it Husband, Father, Priest, or Single. Be assured also of something better than my prayers: the Grace you can receive by regularly going to Penance and then receiving the Eucharist. That is a "one-two punch" that Satan cannot withstand. All you need to do is to have the wisdom and humility to sincerely receive those sacraments.

Attached below is an article I found on the KofC website on Fatherhood, from our neighbor Soren Johnson of the Trinity House Cafe no less.

Be Strong. Be Holy. Be a Saint.

ICXC NIKA,  
Deacon Noah

## Dad's Big Day - and Influence

**Step up your spiritual leadership while sheltering at home**

by Soren Johnson 6/1/2020

Father's Day is a chance for every man to reflect on his father's legacy — and his own. As Knights, we should strive to hand down to our children our most precious

*Deacon Noah (Continued on page 2)*

## From our Grand Knight

Brother Knights,

When taking over this position I reminded myself of the four core principles of the Knights of Columbus.

### **4 Principles / 4 Reasons**

<https://www.kofc.org/en/who-we-are/about-membership/our-principles.html>

**Charity** - *"There is no better way to experience love and compassion than by helping those in need, a call we answer every day."*

Most of us joined the Knights to help our Parish and community. If not for Charity, then why are did you join the Knights? The council offers numerous opportunities to serve others and raise funding for worthy causes. These efforts include food drives, pancake breakfasts, KOVAR collections, handyman work, Special Olympics, and other various events. And of course we are always open to new ideas.

If you have not been very active recently, or ever, please consider devoting even one hour of your time this year to help others. Start small. We greatly need help outside of the core group of regular volunteers.

**Unity** - *"None of us is as good as all of us. Members of the Knights of Columbus all know that – together – we can accomplish far more than any of us could individually."*

Directly tied to Charity is the fact we are more im-

*Grand Knight (Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 1) Deacon Noah

possession, the fullness of the Catholic faith. According to researchers, 56% of kids whose relationship with their dad is “warm and close” will share his degree of religious commitment. If that relationship is weak, the child is 20% less likely to follow his father’s faith. I was blessed to be close to my dad and experience his outsized influence in this area. Only as an adult did I learn how close he came to rejecting faith.

Growing up as the son of a Protestant preacher, my dad chafed at his own father’s aloofness from the family. Instead of playing catch in the backyard, his dad often holed up in the study, preparing his next sermon. By the time he reached college, my dad was angry at God and at his parents, and he nearly flunked out. Yet rather than blame others, he began to read the Bible cover to cover. Years later, he told me that despite his academic failures, he found the pearl of great price: a “personal faith” in Jesus Christ that I would witness throughout my life. He forgave his father and set out on the path to becoming a man of faith and service.

As a child, I often found my dad reading Scripture or spending time in prayer on the front porch. To this day, I treasure one of his Bibles, filled with his own marks of various words and verses. My experience reflects social science research, summarized by Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix in his apostolic exhortation “Into the Breach”: “If a man’s children see him read the Scriptures, they are more likely to remain in the faith.”

Dads are works in progress and, we pray, saints in the making. Throughout my childhood, I saw my dad’s shortcomings and his struggles with his temper, impatience and bouts of depression. But his faith, his love of God, was the through line of his life. Attending church was a priority. His spiritual leadership in the home — marked by a deep love for my mom and us kids — set the tone. On our kitchen wall, a framed cross-stitch cross read, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Citing a 2000 report in the journal *Population Studies*, author Eric Sammons observes, “Only 2% of kids whose fathers don’t practice the faith will end up practicing that faith!” While many studies highlight the significant influence of mothers in other areas, research points to a distinctive edge that dads have on their children’s religious outlook. If dads disengage from faith, their kids are prone to dismiss it.

This Father’s Day — a Father’s Day like no other in the

confinement of the pandemic — is a fitting time to reflect on our spiritual influence. Living in close family quarters for months, you have a unique opportunity to build a house of prayer and peace, based on an awareness of life’s bigger issues. In 20 years, your kids will no doubt tell stories about the pandemic of 2020; what you do now will determine whether they look back with a roll of the eyes or fond reminiscences of a loving dad who humbly led with faith.

Picking up my dad’s Bible recently, I came to a verse with dark red underlining. “You are my beloved Son,” he had marked, “with you I am well pleased.” I stared long and hard at the words and gave thanks for my beloved dad, for the legacy he gave me, and for the opportunity I now have to guide my children heavenward.

\*\*\*

## A Thorn in the Flesh 2 Corinthians 12:7



In the quiet of Damascus, a blinding light  
A voice, like thunder, shook the desert night.  
“Saul, Saul,” it called, piercing through his pride,  
“Why persecute me? Why run from the tide?”

And there, on the road, a thorn took root,  
Embedded deep, a constant ache, absolute.  
Not a physical pain, but a spiritual weight,  
His weakness, his struggle, his lifelong debate.

Three times he pleaded, “Take it away!”  
But the answer came: “My grace is your stay.”  
So Paul carried the thorn, a secret he bore,  
His weakness a vessel for God’s boundless shore.

Through shipwrecks and beatings, through hunger and strife,  
He pressed on, relentless, proclaiming new life.  
To the Gentiles he journeyed, with Love as his guide,  
His thorn a reminder: in weakness, God’s pride.

And when the end neared, his race nearly run,  
He knew—he had fought, he had conquered, he’d won.  
The thorn remained, but its purpose was clear:  
To keep him humble, reliant, drawing God near.

So let us remember St. Paul’s sacred quest,  
His thorn, his hardships, his unwavering zest.  
For in weakness, we find strength, and in grace,  
We echo his legacy—a light in the darkest space.

Poem by Robert N. Borghese 2024. All rights reserved.

*(Continued from page 1)*

pactful as a united council than any one of us can be through our individual efforts.

It is an awesome thing to see our group work as a team during these charitable events. In doing so we help to drive Unity within our Parish. Come out and see for yourself at a pancake breakfast or the Parish Picnic on October 6th.

**Fraternity** – *“Blessed Michael J. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus, in large part, to provide assistance to the widows and children left behind when the family breadwinner died – often prematurely.”*

When the Knights were established in 1882, many families were in despair with very few options if the father passed away at an early age. As a Brother Knight, the KoC provided a greater sense of security that your family would not simply be left to fend for themselves if you passed.

You can still see these values today. Last fraternal year two very active and wonderful Knights passed, Mr. Dana Stalcup and Mr. Dick Sena. The council immediately offered support to their families in whatever way they required.

Taking care of our families is integral and the access to KoC insurance and financial planning are great benefits to being a Knight.

Lastly, you can see this Fraternity at social events and the quarterly new member recruitment / existing Knights happy hour at Parallel Wine Bistro. Our council is also a great network of professional individuals during a time of finding employment opportunities. You just have to take the time to get to know them.

**Patriotism** – *“We are proud of our devotion to God and country, and believe in standing up for both. Whether it’s in public or private, the Knights remind the world that Catholics support their nations and are amongst the greatest citizens.”*

Has there ever been a more critical time than now to publicly display our devotion to God and our great country? Everyone with access to a mobile phone, television, or radio is bearing witness to the systematic targeting of Catholics and attempts to eradicate the core virtues of our Faith. Labeling Catholic Americans as domestic terrorists and burning an American flag in protest has become acceptable. We need to remind the world every day what it means to practice the virtues of Christ and why the United States is the greatest country on Earth as protected by our Constitutional rights.

Our faith and our patriotism should be worn proudly and publicly, now more than ever.

That’s all I got. I hope to see you and I am looking forward to another great year with the council of St. Louis Martin #15256!

Mike Boyle, GK

## **Pancake Breakfasts Set for 2024-2025 Fraternal Year**

The following dates have been set for this Fraternal year’s pancake breakfasts, along with the charities each will support:

September 8: **Military Archdiocese**  
October 13: **Local Pregnancy Support Centers**  
November 10: **VA Special Olympics**  
December 8: (with Festival of Trees): **Divine Mercy**  
January 12: **Knights of Virginia Wheelchair Mission**  
February 9: **Diocesan Work Camp**  
March 9: **St. Theresa School Thunder Appeal**  
May 18: **Haiti Mission**

We look forward to another successful year of bringing our Parish together for a great cause. Last year we collected over \$11,000 in donations and donated \$5000 to charity.

Hope to see you there!



# Tattered

By Doug Smith

During the sorting and preparation of the old and worn flags that were collected in this past summer, I folded many, many flags that had seen their better days. Most were faded, many with holes, and quite a few that were torn and tattered. The majority of the flags were well past their prime and suffered from neglect.

It occurred to me that the flag's condition was more than just a statement of well-meaning people who put the flag out and forgot about it. Rather than a symbol of the pride that the household had for our country, it was just a "patriotic ornamentation" of the house. When the flag was first hung, it might have been an example that this household was proud of our country. But over time, other events overtook the original meaning and it just became a worn ornamentation.

Looking beyond flags, how many other things start out one way and wind up as something else? The house, itself, may start out new and fresh. But without maintenance, things start to tarnish and break. And the people in the house? When the calendar becomes overcrowded with activities, does the family stay the same or do its members start to suffer?

Beyond the immediate family, how many of our elderly are neglected, sometimes even by family members? When my mother-in-law was in a Sunrise facility in Seattle, we flew out once a month. Some residents commented to us that they were amazed to see us so often since they were lucky to see their own family once a year.

Let's look at our own lives. Are we fresh and vibrant like a new flag when it is hung out for the first time? The red, white, and blue are bright and cheerful when the wind catches it in a breeze. Or are we a tad faded with some holes and tears in our souls? Just like the house with its flag, we need maintenance. Maintenance for ourselves and how we interact with our family. Tending to ourselves doesn't have to take long, perhaps prayer here and there, a request for forgiveness, a visit to the confessional, quiet meditation and reflection, and/or

giving thanks to the all-mighty God who gives us life and everything we have. To keep our souls from getting worn and tattered, take time to refresh and renew it. You will be better off for it.

Oh, yes ... there was one almost new flag that was being retired. Someone still has pride in displaying the flag – replacing and refreshing it before it becomes tattered. I hope that they do the same with their spiritual life.

\*\*\*

## Handyman Crew Update

The handyman committee continues to do excellent work in supporting the parish community, in particular helping those that are disabled and widowed, with repairs and maintenance. Recent projects included repairing a leaky water valve, assembling a walker, hanging clocks, repairing closet doors, repairing a reel lawn mower, replacing drywall, and replacing toilet parts.

If you are interested in volunteering for this rewarding ministry, please contact Dale Stucke ([dalestucke@outlook.com](mailto:dalestucke@outlook.com)).

## Food Drive Update

Our Council's monthly food drive to benefit the Loudoun Catholic Charities Food Bank is one of our most successful and impactful community programs. In the past year, over 50,000 lbs. of food were donated to those in need. That success has in no small measure been the direct result of program leader Erich Stefanyshyn's hard work and attention to detail; as well as the generosity of our parishioners and the help of the many volunteers, including the Youth Group. Key to the coordination of the Youth Group is Paul Dwyer; his efforts have been instrumental.

This year brother Erich Stefanyshyn turned over leadership of the program to brother Torsten Koehler. A big thank you to Erich for his efforts over the last 3 years, as we look forward to Torsten's success in keeping the food drive as strong as ever!

## Book Review:

### *The Seven Story Mountain* by Thomas Merton

By ROBERT N. BORGHESE

*The Seven Story Mountain*, An Autobiography of Faith, by Thomas Merton, is a profound spiritual autobiography that has left an indelible mark on readers worldwide.

The book's title refers to the seven stages of ascent in Dante's Purgatorio, symbolizing Merton's own spiritual climb.

In my opinion, all Catholic men should read the book. The book is useful for bringing about conversions and encouraging those who have fallen away to return to the Faith. I gave a copy to each of my sons.

At its core, *The Seven Story Mountain* chronicles the restless journey of a brilliant young man—Merton himself—toward faith and inner peace. Taking vows as a Trappist monk at the Abbey of Gethsemani, a monastery in Trappist, KY, he grapples with the tension between withdrawal from the world and immersion in it. Merton shares with the reader many things that interested him along his spiritual journey. For instance, he writes several pages about the artist, poet, and mystic William Blake (1757-1827) which encouraged me to learn more about Blake also.

Merton's writing is both vivid and contemplative. His prose ranges from crisp vernacular to passionate eloquence, occasionally bordering on religious ecstasy. Its raw authenticity and sincerity resonate deeply.

Catholic authors Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene greatly admired the book.

"A book which may well prove to be of permanent interest in the history of religious experience." Evelyn Waugh

"It is a rare pleasure to read an autobiography with a pattern and meaning valid for us all," wrote Graham Greene. "*The Seven Story Mountain* is a book one reads with a pencil so as to make it one's own." This sentiment encapsulates the book's enduring impact—a call to engage, reflect, and inscribe our own spiritual narratives.

- RB



## CURRENT COUNCIL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS (2023-2024)

Chaplain  
District Deputy  
Grand Knight  
Deputy Grand Knight  
Chancellor  
Financial Secretary  
Warden  
Recorder  
Treasurer  
Advocate  
Trustees

Primary Alt. Sate Del.  
Secondary Alt. State Del.  
Programs Director  
Lecturer  
Inside Guard  
Outside Guard  
Faith Director  
Vocations Chairman  
Community Director  
Life Director  
Public Relations

Family Director  
Membership Director  
Recruitment Committee  
Retention Chairman  
Construction Team Lead  
KOVAR Team Lead  
Fraternal Benefits Field Agent  
Technology Team  
Parish Picnic

Father Hudgins  
Jay Hallam  
Mike Boyle  
Eric Ciliberti  
Dan Brendes  
Jim Bonfils  
Steve Shields  
Stephen McLaughlin  
Mike Lang  
Cole Slattery  
3 Yr. John Hegarty  
2 Yr. Rob McNamee  
1 Yr. Miguel Rodriguez  
Miguel Rodriguez  
William Lehner  
Mike Boyle  
Bill Lehner  
Garth Griswold  
Savio Thomas  
Jack Hayes  
Vince Tranchitella  
Stephen McLaughlin  
Eric Ciliberti  
Rudy Flores  
Dave Schreder  
Eric Ciliberti  
Robert Borghese  
Torsten Koehler  
Dan Brendes  
Jack Hayes  
Jack Hayes  
Dale Stucke  
Donald J. Smaltz  
Vacant  
Anthony Gizzi  
William Lehner



Visit our Website: <https://www.st-louismartin-kofc.org/>