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Of Ashburn

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A Message From Deacon Paul

The season of Lent is here once again. Since the earliest times of the Church, there is evidence of some kind of Lenten preparation for Easter. For instance, St. Irenaeus wrote to Pope St. Victor I in the late 2nd century, commenting on the celebration of Easter and the differences between practices in the East and the West. By the end of the 4th century, the 40-day period of Easter preparation known as Lent existed, and prayer and fasting constituted its primary spiritual exercises.

Why 40 days? The forty-day length of Lent is rooted in the biblical usage of the number forty. The number forty is not meant to be taken literally. Instead, it means a time of testing, trial, penance, purification, and renewal. On Mount Sinai, Moses prepared to receive the Ten Commandments and “stayed there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, without eating any food or drinking any water” (Ex 34:28). Elijah walked “40 days and 40 nights” to the mountain of the Lord, Mount Horeb. (1 Kgs 19:8). Most importantly, Jesus fasted and prayed for “40 days and 40 nights” in the desert before He began His public ministry (Mt 4:2).

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday. The liturgical use of ashes originated in the Old Testament times. Ashes symbolized mourning, mortality, and penance. The early Church used ashes in its penitential rites, but it was not until the 8th century that we find rituals in liturgical texts referring to the “Day of Ashes.” Those rituals called for a spreading of ashes on the penitent. Over the centuries, it has evolved to the cross of ashes on the forehead that we use today to mark the beginning of the penitential season of Lent.

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the three things we focus on during Lent. Baptized Catholics from age 18 until age 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and

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From Our Grand Knight

"Lent is a season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As Catholics and as Knights, it's an opportunity to grow closer in our relationship with Jesus Christ so we can better lead our families and serve our parishes and communities."

Each year, I personally struggle with finding something to give up, ways to commit to praying more often, or simply commit to doing better for something meaningful. I usually procrastinate until the last-minute driving home with ashes on my head.

I also personally struggle on what to write for these newsletters. Who am I to write anything inspiring or insightful to share with our Council? The only thing I can think of is to report to you all of what I have decided to do this Lent. So now I won't have to be thinking about it this Wednesday.

This year I am going to leverage some resources that are readily available and manageable for me.

- 1) Read Medjugorje Day by Day - [this is a book](#) that was recommended to me by PGK John Hegarty. It provides daily passages, reflections, and applications in a very short and easy to accomplish manner. It takes 4 minutes to read and gives something to meditate upon throughout the day. I will read them in the morning with my first cup of coffee and stick to the recommended application for the day. The good thing about this book is that it provides passages throughout the entire year to practice beyond Lent.

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Good Friday. Fasting means eating one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. Baptized Catholics age 14 and older are obliged to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays in Lent. In addition to working on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, it is also a special time to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Lent is a time of preparation for the liturgical celebration of the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Christ. May this Lent bring be fruitful in taking you another step forward on your faith journey.

- Deacon Paul



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2) Listen to the [regular podcasts](#) from our Chaplain and Pastor Fr. Hudgins. We are extremely lucky to have the priests that we do. All of their homilies are excellent. But what about throughout the week? I do not regularly attend weekday Masses, I probably should...but Fr. Hudgins typically releases four homily podcasts per week. I will be listening to them when they are released.

3) I will tune into the [weekly Lenten video sessions](#) provided by Supreme on the website. Father Jonathan Kalisch, O.P., and Renzo Ortega reflect on how this holy season can form us and allow us to encounter the Lord Jesus. They'll also explore how our Lenten practices and our work as Knights further the mission of Blessed Michael McGivney.

Maybe one of these jumps out to you and you decide to include it in your Lenten season. Maybe not. Either way I hope all of us find something we can stick with!

- Mike Boyle, GK



March 9 Breakfast Crew

SPOTLIGHT ON NEW MEMBERS



Meet: Todd Clarke Kane (Todd)
Hails originally from: Philadelphia but grew up in California and Hawaii.

Family: Spouse Elizabeth (Lizzie)
Work: Joint Program Office in Crystal City, studied as a Space Engineer

Hobbies or interests: I am a huge sports fan, and I enjoy staying active (going for walks, going to the gym, etc.). I am interested in joining a hockey league, if anyone knows of one!

What prompted you to join the Knights of Columbus? I joined the Knights for several reasons: - to serve my Parish; - to meet people and experience brotherhood; and to learn more about my Faith, and to put it in action



Meet: Jeff Morris
Hails from: Cambridge, Ohio
Family: Spouse, Amber and two children, ages 9 and 12
Work: Contract Architect in the Defense Industry

Hobbies or interests: Outdoor activities and swimming

What prompted you to join the Knights of Columbus? Looking to make connections and relationships with other men in the parish. Hoping to contribute to the parish community whenever there is a chance.

My Cries, You Cannot Hear



Me, in the womb, I feel forlorn,
I lay in the womb's gentle sway,
My mother's tears, a silent storm,
Turn my own bright joy to gray.

Our tender bond, so fragile, intertwined,
My heart mirrors her sorrow's weight,
I seek her love but do not find,
And sadness wraps our shared fate.

Her cries mingle with the night,
I can sense her deep ache,
Innocence overshadowed by the plight,
I have a child's love that just won't break.

Mommy, what I see looks like a knife!
Mommy, mommy, I am in fear!
It's coming to take away my life!
Mommy, my cries, you cannot hear!

And then there was silence on the earth,
A holy innocent did not make it to birth,
Yet loved by God if no one else.

When I am from the womb free,
Maybe then you'll love me.

Mommy, when we in heaven rest
And you can put me on your knee
And when I nestle to your breast
Then I know you'll love me.

Poem by Robert N. Borghese 2025. All rights reserved.



Meet Antonio Lazaro Igot (Tony)
Hails from: the Philippines

Family: Married to Rebecca Reyes Igot or Reby. Next year be our 50th anniversary (February 15th)! We have 3 children (Cecille, Paolo and Tricia) and 7 grandsons spread across the States, Canada, and the Philippines. My wife and I emigrated permanently to the USA in 2016.

Work: Retired licensed Mechanical Engineer in the Philippines. I worked as a construction engineer with 2 companies in the Philippines and formed my own small time construction company.

Hobbies or interests: I am a used Stamp Collector. I used to be a band member playing the guitar during my school days and a Choir member of our church. I was a member of the Knights of Columbus in the Philippines for 10 years. At one time, I held the position of DGK (Deputy Grand Knight in 2015)

What prompted you to join the Knights of Columbus? Jack Hayes assisted me in completing the transfer application. I was eager to join and look forward to meeting other Knights!

Book Review:

Collected Works of Flannery O'Connor

By ROBERT N. BORGHESE

Can you handle the TRUTH? Well, maybe, just maybe, you can handle the TRUTHS in the writings of Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964).

In her much too short life, Flannery O'Connor died at the age of 39 from kidney failure caused by lupus, she amazed the literary world with Catholic religious truths portrayed not in saints but in sinners and misfits in her novels and short stories.

In her most famous novel "Wise Blood," the protagonist preaches "The Church Without Christ." Can you deny Christ without consequence? Read it and find out what happens. Sigmund Freud would have loved this novel!

In her short story "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," we see what happens when innocence and good-mannered politeness meet abject evil. Some reviewers thought there were comic elements in the story, but I was disturbed pondering this encounter between good and evil and continue to be haunted by the outcome.

When I'm reading Flannery O'Connor's works, I have to stop and say to myself, "Wait, wait! Was this REALLY written by a young, nice, devout Catholic girl from a small town in Georgia?"

If you are up to letting truth sneak up on you and hit you right between the eyes, much like some of our priests' homilies (smile), then you are ready to read Flannery O'Connor.

"The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it." — Flannery O'Connor

Her works are classics and readily available. The Library of America (a nonprofit organization), has collected her works in one hardcover volume entitled "Flannery O'Connor, Collected Works."

Robert Borghese

In A Split Second

In February of 2025, an Army helicopter sliced into a jet plane approaching Reagan Airport. In a split second, the lives of 67 people were ended. There is no way that any of them could have prepared for their final moments.

In our Exemplification ceremony, it states "*Time flies. Remember death. We must remain vigilant, for we know not the day, nor the hour, when we will be called to give an account of our life. We must prepare for our death spiritually. And it is our duty to protect those who have been entrusted to our care by God - to be good stewards and to safeguard their future*"

The collision of those two aircraft is an extreme, though real, example that as Knights, we have to be on the top of our game when it comes to being prepared ... and not just Boy Scout prepared. While you read this article, start thinking about your preparedness. Start with the worldly things -- finances, insurance, will or trust, etc. Next move to the details after your passing -- funeral and burial plans, plans for those left behind. The deaths of my parents and those of my wife spurred me into action to make things as easy as possible for those who are left behind.

To return to "... we know not the day, nor the hour ...", if you had been on that plane, would you be spiritually ready to meet our God? There would have been no time for "I'm sorry" or a last-moment confession or a "Please forgive me." *Tempus Fugit. Memento Mori.* Every day has a finite number of minutes. What we do with those minutes is largely controlled by each one of us. Why not take a few of those minutes to decide to be better prepared ... just in case.

If you had been on that plane, would you have been ready to meet our maker?

- Doug Smith

KOVAR UPDATE



Our recent KOVAR collection, after all Masses the weekend of January 19, resulted in our generous parishioners donating \$3300. This is a genuinely nice amount for a single weekend collection.

Many brother Knights, as well as their family members and friends, volunteered to wear a KOVAR vest and hand out tootsie rolls at all the Church exits.

Look for an email in early April to sign up for our next collection on April 26 and 27, 2025. Plan now to help with this worthy cause: it only takes a few minutes of your time after mass, and when you're done, there will be little traffic getting out of the lot! Your help and support make a difference, and KOVAR appreciates your support.

Over the past 10 years, our council has provided approximately \$74k to KOVAR, which provides financial assistance through grants and home loans to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

- Don Smaltz

Strong Food Drive Results

After we took a break in December, the Food Drive is in full flight again.

In January, we started strong and collected and delivered 4,642 pounds of food from our generous parishioners to the Catholic Charities Food Pantry in Sterling, VA.

As I am writing this update, we just completed the February Food Drive with 5,299 pounds of food delivered, all sorted by category and expiration

date! The sorting saves the pantry workers approximately 2 weeks of work with the result that the food can be on the shelves for those in need that much earlier.

We would like to take a moment and thank all Knights, Youth, and especially our parishioners who have consistently been helping with this important program to make it as successful as it is. If you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer, we can always use your help. Just look for the Food Drive emails that are sent to all Knights every month, or head on over to <https://www.st-louismartin-kofc.org/upcomingevents> and sign up.

The Food Drive Core Team: Erich Stefanyshyn, Joey Delaney, John Beauschesne, John Kirincich, Lem Kamanya, Paul Dwyer, Rob McNamee, and Torsten Koehler

- Torsten Koehler



Pancake Breakfast on February 9

After the unfortunate cancellation of our January pancake breakfast, the second scheduled breakfast of 2025 went off without a hitch on February 9. Profits from this breakfast will benefit Diocesan Work Camp.

We had a great group of volunteers that included students that are participating in this year's Work Camp program, led by Michael Dunne. A total of 8 students volunteered, helping with a number of activities such as serving, bussing and wiping tables, and taking the garbage out. The students helped make the busy serving line run smoothly and efficiently.

We also had two new Council members volunteer at the breakfast for the first time: Nick Totoro and Edward Sniezek.

A late update...our breakfast on March 9 was also a great success. We were able to collect over \$1700 in donations, profits from which will support St. Theresa school's Thunder Appeal. We also had two new members volunteer; Dave Buckley and Lee Stratton.

Thanks to all!



CURRENT COUNCIL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS (2024 -2025)

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

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
Ben Turner
Anthony Gizzi
William Lehner

Primary Alt. State 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

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