



Knights of Columbus

St. Oliver Plunkett Council 13440

Knights News



Issue 15

May 2026

Chaplain Father Cyriac	Grand Knight Javier Tavira	Deputy Grand Knight Carey Scruggs	Financial Secretary Frank Montelione	Treasurer Mark Lavton	Advocate Ray Prosek	Warden Richard Bellnier
Recorder	Chancilor Bill Childress	One Year Trustee Fritz Siler	Two Year Trustee Robert Barnard	Three Year Trustee Todd Morrow	Inside Guard Patrick Chiah	Outside Guard John Spudich

Volunteer Support Needed to Sustain Council Programs

Volunteers Needed

I'm sure you've heard the adage – "80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. In our Council the ratio is more like 90/10.

At the last meeting it was brought to a head when GK Javier Tavira said that the Mother's Day Breakfast had to shut down early, not because they ran out of food, but because we didn't have the manpower to continue after the 9:30 mass. It was made more apparent when Robert Barnard said that because of the lack of volunteers, we were missing the opportunity to increase our income because we don't have enough volunteers to man the concession stand at the Stripers games.

The editor of this newsletter sends out calls for help whenever an event is approaching. It is believed that many of the emails go unopened. The response is anemic.

Brothers, you joined our organization to assist in Church, Family, Life and Community projects. Many times, we ask for only 15 minutes before or after your regular mass. Sunday, May 25th, we had two events – giving out American Flags to solicit funds for Wreaths Across America, which had no more than 3 Brothers helping, and at some Masses, only Robert Barnard helped. The other was the Chaplet of the Devine Mercy which no one showed up for. What made this an embarrassment to the Council was that it was announced from the Altar and published in the bulletin.

The editor has led the Chaplet at various times. He's seen many members of the Council attend the 11:15 Mass but not stay for the Chaplet. We've heard about 10 different excuses why they couldn't stay.

Once a month our Council holds a regular meeting. Prior to the meeting we gather in the Chapel for the Rosary. Participation is low and not even those there for the meeting attend.

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From the Desk of The District Deputy Robert Barnard:



On behalf of the district, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our Knights of Columbus council on another successful and inspiring year of service. Your dedication, sacrifice, and faithful commitment have strengthened your parish, supported your community, and reflected the very best of what it means to be a Knight. Each program, charitable effort, and act of fraternity has made a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

This accomplishment is especially significant because it continues the vision of **Father Michael McGivney**, who founded the Knights of Columbus to keep men close to the faith and to protect and serve Catholic families. He believed that faith must be lived through charity, and that true brotherhood is built when men come together in service to God, the Church, and one another. Your council has carried that vision forward with strength and purpose throughout the past year.

Through your works of charity, your support for parish life, your outreach to those in need, and your commitment to unity and fraternity, you have shown that Father McGivney's mission remains alive and relevant today. In a world that often challenges faith and family life, your example stands as a witness of Christian solidarity, compassion, and faithful leadership. You have not simply completed another year of activity; you have strengthened the bonds of brotherhood and brought hope to those you serve.

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At the meeting itself, Attendance at the meeting often presents a challenge when a vote is needed and we barely have a quorum of 12 members out of 85.

Most of our events include families. You will often see one of our Brothers children help set up at for events, assist in sales and other functions. For some of our projects, we greatly encourage family members to assist. Some of our projects, like soccer challenges, essay contests and the like our own children were not supported by our own families.

Only about 40% of those who this Newsletter is sent to open it, so we may be preaching to the choir, but we hope that those who do, we hope will spread the word.

Your Council can only work with your support. *Please, please, consider helping at future meetings and events.*

Thank you for your continued service, your devotion to our Order, and your witness to the Gospel in action. I am proud of all that this council has accomplished, and I encourage each of you to continue building on this success in the year ahead. May God bless your council, your families, and all your efforts as you continue to live the legacy and vision of Father Michael McGivney.

Council Officers Elected for the Fraternal Year 2026-2027

At the May 18 meeting, the first item under New Business was the election of officers. Our incoming officers, though relatively new members, have answered the call to leadership with courage, energy, and a vision for fresh ideas and new programs for the Council. They have stepped forward in service to our brotherhood; now it is our turn to stand with them, support them, and work together to strengthen our Council for the year ahead.

They are:

Grand Knight	Patrick Chieh
Deputy Grand Knight	Charlly Ezrike
Treasurer	Mark Layton
Advocate	Ray Prosek
Warden	Carlos Sanchez
Recorder	Todd Kroeger
Inside Guard	Ryan Barnard
Outside Guard	John Spudich
3 Year Trustee	Tito Esparsa
3 Year Trustee	Fritz Siler
1 Year Trustee	Robert Barnard

The Financial Secretary, Frank Montelione, is not an elected position but is appointed by Supreme for a 3-year term.

The position of Chancellor is open. The Chancellor’s duties are defined by Supreme:

- Assists the grand knight and deputy grand knight with their duties, as assigned

- Is entrusted with strengthening the members’ interest in council activities
- Is recommended to serve as the chairman of the Admission Committee
- Performs other such duties as the grand knight may direct

Please pray about it and if the Spirit moves you, volunteer for this position.

RSVP SUCCESS STORY

We have participated in the support of seminarians since the inception of our Council. It is with great pleasure that we received the following invitation to the ordination of Fred Williams, the son of Brother Micky Williams, who we have been supporting.

With praise and gratitude to Almighty God,
the Roman Catholic Diocese of Savannah
joyfully announces the Ordination of

Fredrick Moses Williams

to the Holy Priesthood through the
imposition of hands
and the invocation of the Holy Spirit
by The Most Reverend Stephen D. Parkes
Bishop of Savannah

Saturday, June 6, 2026, AT 10 A.M.
Cathedral of St. John the Baptist
222 E. Harris St., Savannah, GA 31401

Fr. Fred will be the celebrant at the 11:15 a.m. Mass at St. Oliver’s in June 14, 2026, and will be assigned to St Joseph’s in Macon. A reception will follow the Mass, offering our parish and Council community an opportunity to congratulate him and celebrate this joyful occasion together. This is a special moment not only for Fr. Fred and his family, but also for all of us who have watched and supported him on his journey toward the priesthood. I strongly encourage all Brothers to show their support, offer their prayers, and encourage Fr. Fred as he begins this sacred ministry of service to God and His people.



Why Is May the Month of Mary?

For Catholics around the world, the month of May holds a special place in our hearts as the Month of Mary. As spring brings new life, blooming flowers, and renewed beauty to the world around us, the Church invites us to honor the Blessed Mother, whose faith and obedience brought Christ into the world.

The tradition of dedicating May to Mary, mother of Jesus dates back centuries. Christians began offering flowers, prayers, and

special devotions to Mary during this season as a symbol of love and gratitude. Over time, these customs grew into the familiar May devotions we know today, including Rosary prayers, May Crownings, and Marian processions.

As Knights of Columbus, we look to Mary as a model of faith, humility, and service. Her example reminds us to place our trust

in God, care for our families, and serve others with compassion. During this month, we are encouraged to pray the Rosary, spend time in reflection, and ask for Mary's intercession for our Church, our nation, and our families.

One way is to pray the Rosary regularly. During the Month of Mary, it is fitting to increase our devotion to Our Lady. But there are few devotions as beloved as the Holy Rosary. In this excerpt from *20 Answers: The Rosary*, Tom Nash traces the origins of the Rosary and explains how it developed into the form Catholics know today.

Until recent centuries, illiteracy was widespread. Things began to change in the mid-1400s, when Johannes Gutenberg invented a printing press that allowed for mass production of literature with associated major cost savings. Prior to that, those who read the Bible were the educated few, including many Catholic clergy.

Praying with Scripture—especially the Psalms—dates back to the time before the Incarnation, when Jews prayed the Psalms at set times each day and also read other passages from Scripture. The early Church continued this practice, which gradually developed into the Divine Office, or Liturgy of the Hours, collected in a book known as the breviary.

In time, beginning in the 800s and particularly with uneducated Irish monks, a “poor man’s psalter” or breviary developed for those who couldn’t read and understand Latin. It consisted of the repeated praying of the Our Father or, in Latin, Paternoster. The term psalter derives from the 150 psalms in the book of Psalms. The monks and lay faithful would use prayer beads to keep track of the number of Our Fathers prayed.

Devotion to the Blessed Mother also increased over time, with the “Marian Psalter” becoming more common in the 1100s, and the praying of 150 Hail Marys mirroring the Paternosters prayed in the poor man’s psalter. Also, fifteen Our Fathers were added in short order to divide the Hail Marys into sets of ten or decades.

Then, in 1208, in Fanjeaux, France, according to the longstanding pious tradition, to which popes have attested for centuries, St. Dominic received from Our Lady the mandate to combine the recitation of the Marian Psalter with preaching and meditation on the key mysteries of her divine son’s life.

The timing was providential, because Dominic and other leaders in the Church were combating the Albigensians, a heretical group whose members believed that the spiritual aspect of man

was made by a good god and thus morally good, whereas the body was made by an evil god and thus morally bad. Consequently, mysteries of our Lord’s life that countered this dualistic error—e.g., the Incarnation and Christ’s passion, death, resurrection, and ascension—enabled Dominic and his confreres to form the faithful well through preaching and related meditation.

Some critics have countered that the tradition that Mary gave St. Dominic the rosary originated only in 1470, the miscreation of another Dominican, Blessed Alan de la Roche. In addition, these critics have argued, Dominic the Prussian, a Carthusian monk, actually started the meditative rosary—versus simply praying Hail Marys—earlier in the 1400s.

However, in the mid-20th century, French Dominican Mathieu Gorce cited an early-fourteenth-century document by a fellow Dominican describing the prayer of the Hail Mary accompanied by meditation on the mysteries of the faith—a method of preaching and prayer believed to have been entrusted to St. Dominic as a heavenly mission. Then, in 1977, Andreas Heinz, a historian at the University of Trier in Germany, discovered another early-fourteenth-century manuscript describing the rosary prayed with meditations on the life of Christ.

The last portion of the Hail Mary, in which Mary is prayerfully invoked, dates to the mid-1300s, as a response to the Black Plague that ravaged Europe. Though variations on the mysteries developed over time, the fifteen traditional mysteries would become standardized, beginning with the rosary revival Blessed Alan de la Roche started in the 1400s and which Pope St. Pius V authoritatively reaffirmed in his papal bull.

In 2002, Pope St. John Paul II instituted the Luminous Mysteries, which cover the period of Christ’s life from his adolescence to the beginning of Holy Week.



Over the past few months, I have been writing about the dangers of A.I. I have focused the article on families and the dangerous influence Artificial Intelligence poses.

The Vatican’s new AI guidelines remind us that technology should always serve people—not replace them. While AI can be helpful, it can never replace human compassion, moral judgment, or the dignity God gives every person. The Church calls us to use these new tools wisely, protecting the vulnerable and promoting the common good. As Knights of Columbus, we are reminded that even in a digital world, we are called to stand for human dignity, faith, and compassion in our communities.

The following is an excerpt from [“Will AI marginalize the faithful? Catholics call for ethical oversight”](#) found on EWTN News.

Catholic leaders in Europe are warning that people of faith risk being pushed to the margins as artificial intelligence policy becomes dominated by technical and commercial interests

rather than moral reflection. At a recent COMECE “Ethics of AI” dialogue in Brussels, advisers noted that “marginalization risk exists when guidance is shaped primarily by technical, commercial, and regulatory actors”, especially as the EU’s AI Act classifies high-risk systems in areas like employment, migration, and healthcare Current page. Failures in medical AI—such as diagnosis tools or robotic surgery—could lead to “serious injury or death”, underscoring the need for ethical oversight. Recent controversies, including investigations into X’s AI chatbot Grok for generating harmful deepfakes involving minors Current page and a U.S. trial on whether social-media algorithms harm children, highlight the urgency. Professor Philip McDonagh emphasized that faith communities reach “84% of the global population” and that excluding them widens gaps in ethical oversight and AI literacy. He and other leaders call for ongoing dialogue rooted in human dignity, pointing to Article 17 of the EU Treaty as a path for continued engagement Current page. They also note alignment between Vatican initiatives—such as the *Rome Call for AI Ethics*—and India’s MANAV vision, both urging AI that “supports rather than replaces human decision-making”. For Catholics, this moment is a reminder that the Church must help ensure technology serves the human person and the common good.

Pope Leo XIV’s [Magnifica Humanitas](#) teaches that in an age shaped by artificial intelligence, the Church must safeguard the God-given dignity and “magnificence” of the human person, warning that the deepest danger is not job loss or biased algorithms but the temptation to see ourselves as projects to be optimized rather than persons made for relationship and communion. The encyclical affirms that human limits—illness, aging, vulnerability—are not defects to erase but places where wisdom, solidarity, and God’s presence are discovered. AI, therefore, should support truth, education, authentic relationships, justice, and peace rather than efficiency as an ultimate value Current page. Drawing on Scripture—from Babel’s warning against technocratic self-assertion to Nehemiah’s model of communal, responsible building—the document calls all people, not only Catholics, to discern how technology can serve the common good without redefining humanity itself. (Read more at [Ascension Press](#))

[**University of Nebraska–Lincoln Issues Apology After Drag Performance Mocking the Mass**](#)

More than a year after a drag show that openly mocked the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) has formally apologized and met with Bishop James Conley to address the scandal and outline reforms. The April 12, 2025, event—titled the “*Mass of Perpetual Indulgence*”—included parodies of the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, prompting widespread outrage among Catholics and Church leaders.

In an April 24 pastoral letter, Bishop Conley reported that he met with UNL President Jeffrey Gold and members of the Board

of Regents to review how the university has responded to the incident. University officials acknowledged failures in oversight and communication and confirmed that new “guardrails” and review processes have been put in place to prevent similar offenses in the future Current page.

Among the reforms is the creation of an advisory group composed of ethicists, attorneys, and academic leaders to guide the university on sensitive or controversial projects going forward. President Gold also affirmed that additional oversight measures are now active, according to reporting cited by the bishop Current page.

Bishop Conley previously condemned the performance as “disturbing and appalling” and a “blatant public display of faith-based discrimination”. While the university’s apology and reforms mark a positive step, the incident remains a reminder of the ongoing need for vigilance, respectful dialogue, and courageous witness to the dignity of our faith in public life.

For Knights, this moment underscores our mission: to defend the Church, promote respect for the sacred, and stand firmly for religious liberty—always with charity, clarity, and conviction.

[**Religious Freedom Case Emerges in Vidalia, Georgia**](#) [**The Catholic World Report**](#)

A developing case in Vidalia, Georgia, highlights growing concerns about religious liberty, free speech, and parental rights in public education. For eleven years, Rev. Gady Youmans, a Baptist pastor, offered a voluntary release-time religious education program for high-school students—an arrangement fully permitted under U.S. law since the Supreme Court upheld such programs in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952). Students attended off-campus classes with parental consent and received elective credit Current page.

The Vidalia City Schools superintendent abruptly terminated the program after Rev. Youmans posted Facebook comments critical of a proposed school tax increase and aspects of public education. When questioned, officials shifted explanations and cited vague concerns about his Christian perspective, despite the program’s voluntary nature and long record of student participation Current page.

Represented by Alliance Defending Freedom, Rev. Youmans has filed an eight-count federal lawsuit alleging violations of his First Amendment rights—including free speech, free exercise, protection from compelled speech, and due process—along with claims under Georgia’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act .

The article argues that the school board’s actions amount to a “two-fer” infringement on both religious freedom and free speech, noting that Youmans was a private citizen, not a school employee, and that officials attempted to influence the content of his religious instruction—something the Supreme Court has repeatedly forbidden.

Georgia may soon require all school districts to adopt release-time policies under the pending Student Character Development Act, underscoring the statewide significance of the case.

As Knights, this case invites renewed reflection on our duty to defend religious liberty, support parents' rights to direct their children's formation, and remain vigilant when public institutions overreach into matters of faith.

Angelic Answers: Rediscovering the Church's Teaching on Angels and Spiritual Warfare

In today's culture, angels are often reduced to cute decorations, sentimental figurines, or vague symbols of comfort. While these images may be harmless, they miss the profound and awe-inspiring reality of what angels truly are—and why the Church takes them so seriously. In *Angelic Answers*, Fr. Mike Driscoll invites readers to rediscover the Church's authentic teaching on angels, demons, and spiritual warfare, drawing deeply from Sacred Scripture and the rich theological tradition of the Church.

Everything You Need to Know About God's Heavenly Messengers, Guardians, and Guides Since the beginning of time, they have attended the Holy Trinity with unending praise, and at the Bible's pivotal moments they were present. They convey God's saving messages and assist in his continual ordering of the cosmos. Some are hell-bent on our damnation; others intercede tirelessly for our salvation. And there is one assigned just to protect *you*!

They are the *angels*, the order of created spiritual beings: ubiquitous, uncountable, and yet for most of us a great mystery.

A new book from Catholic Answers Press aims to fix that.

In *Angelic Answers: What You Need to Know About God's Heavenly Messengers, Guardians, and Guides*, Fr. Mike Driscoll unpacks the fascinating world of angelology in a uniquely comprehensive and relatable way. Rather than sentimental mascots, angels are presented as intelligent, powerful spiritual beings who serve God's will. Scripture reveals them as messengers, protectors, and participants in God's saving work, actively involved in guiding the faithful and assisting the Church's worship. Fr. Driscoll relies especially on the insights of St. Thomas Aquinas to clarify who angels are, how they differ from one another, and how they interact with the human person. This clear, Catholic approach helps dispel popular myths and replaces them with a vision that is, as the article notes, "far more magnificent than the kitschy cherubs" so common in popular culture.

Equally important, *Angelic Answers* does not shy away from the reality of fallen angels. Fr. Driscoll explains the nature of demons and their deceptive tactics, reminding readers that spiritual warfare is not an abstract idea, but a real struggle faced

by every Christian. With pastoral wisdom, he offers practical guidance on strengthening our relationship with the holy angels—especially our guardian angels—while remaining vigilant against spiritual deception. The focus is not fear, but confidence: confidence rooted in Christ's victory and God's constant provision of heavenly help.

For members of the Knights of Columbus, this message is especially timely. Our mission of charity, unity, and fraternity unfolds within a world where spiritual battles are very real. As Catholic men striving to defend the faith, protect our families, and serve the Church, we are not meant to fight alone. God has given us powerful allies, and Fr. Driscoll's work is a reminder to rely on them with faith and humility.

Angelic Answers ultimately calls readers to renewed spiritual awareness. By understanding the true role of angels and the reality of spiritual warfare, we are better equipped to live our vocation with courage and fidelity. With God's messengers standing beside us, we can move forward confidently serving the Church and the world with renewed trust in God's providential care.

Pope Leo XVIII And The Rosary



On his anniversary, Pope Leo XVIII reflected on how his choice of the papal name Leo connects him to Pope Leo XIII, who championed devotion to the rosary.

"Having chosen the name Leo places me in the footsteps of Leo XIII, who among his other merits, also developed an extensive Magisterium on the Holy Rosary," the Pope said.

In his homily, Pope Leo XIV reflected on the importance of praying the rosary.

"The Hail Mary is an Invitation to joy," he said, "it tells Mary and through her, all of us – that upon the ruins of our humanity, tried by sin and therefore ever prone to oppression, abuse, and way, God's caress has come, the caress of mercy, which takes on a human face in Jesus."

He described the repetition of Hail Mary in the prayer of the rosary as an echo of the angel Gabriel's greeting at the Annunciation, an echo "that spans the centuries and directs the believer's gaze to Jesus, seen through the eyes and heart of his Mother."

In the rosary, he said "Jesus is adored, contemplated, and assimilated in each of his mysteries, so that with St. Paul we may say: 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2:20)."



**Father McGivney:
Founder's Desire For Charity Built Knights
Of Columbus**
As seen in the Georgia Bulletin

Father Michael J. McGivney, a young Irish-American priest serving in New Haven in the late 19th century, founded the Knights of Columbus in 1882 as a charitable and fraternal organization to support Catholic immigrant families facing poverty and anti-Catholic hostility. Before age 30, he gathered 80 laymen in the basement of St. Mary's Church to launch what would become the world's largest Catholic men's organization, now nearly 2 million members strong. McGivney's vision addressed both material need—providing financial assistance to families—and spiritual need, offering an alternative to anti-Catholic secret societies that targeted vulnerable immigrants.

The article situates McGivney's work within the massive wave of 19th-century Catholic immigration and the intense nativist backlash that included violence, discrimination, and public suspicion of Catholic loyalty to America. His choice of the name

"Knights of Columbus" was itself a rebuttal to anti-Catholic bigotry, highlighting that a Catholic—Christopher Columbus—had played a foundational role in American history

Despite early struggles and criticism, McGivney's persistence sustained the fledgling order, even as he carried a heavy pastoral workload in multiple parishes. He died young at 38 after contracting pneumonia, but his legacy grew dramatically. The Knights expanded into a global, ethnically diverse organization known for large-scale charitable giving, strong patriotism, and a clear commitment to Catholic moral teaching, especially on life and marriage issues

Father McGivney was beatified in 2020 after a Vatican-recognized miracle, and his cause for canonization continues



Comical Closure:

A parishioner told Father, "That was a wonderful sermon!"
 Father replied, "Don't thank me — it was the Holy Spirit."
 The parishioner said, "Well, it wasn't that good."

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Father asked the children, "Why must we be quiet in church?"
 One child answered, "Because people are praying."
 Another said, "Because Father is sleeping."

