



Knights of Columbus

St. Oliver Plunkett Council 13440

Knights News



Issue 8

December 2025

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(Summarized From [Christian Themes in Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'](#))



A Christmas Carol is deeply intertwined with religion, using Christian themes like redemption, charity, and judgment to tell a moral story about Scrooge's transformation. While the story isn't a dogmatic religious text, it was written for a Victorian audience familiar with Christian teachings, and it incorporates elements like purgatory (Marley's ghost), a fear of damnation, and the celebration of Christmas as a Christian holy day. The ghosts, particularly the Trinity of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, are interpreted as religious allegories.

Christian themes and symbolism

The Religious Themes in "A Christmas Carol"

Charles Dickens' novella "A Christmas Carol" is deeply intertwined with religion, using Christian themes like redemption, charity, and judgment to tell a moral story about Scrooge's transformation. While the story isn't a dogmatic religious text, it was written for a Victorian audience familiar with Christian teachings, and it incorporates elements like purgatory (Marley's ghost), a fear of damnation, and the celebration of Christmas as a Christian holy day. The ghosts, particularly the Trinity of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, are interpreted as religious allegories.

The novella begins with the introduction of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly old man who has lost touch with the spirit of Christmas and the values of compassion and generosity. His encounter with the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, warning to Scrooge, urging him to change his ways before it's too late.



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From the Desk of the The District Deputy



As we approach the joyous season of Christmas and reflect on the first half of our Fraternal year, I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every member of our Knights of Columbus council. Your dedication, generosity, and unwavering commitment to our shared principles of charity, unity, and fraternity have made a meaningful difference in our parish and community.

Throughout the past months, your collective efforts have brought about positive change—whether it was through organizing events, supporting charitable causes, or offering a helping hand wherever it was needed. Your service has not gone unnoticed, and it is through your hard work that we continue to embody the true spirit of the Knights of Columbus.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas filled with peace, joy, and love. May this season be a time of rest, reflection, and renewal for all of us.

Looking ahead to the second half of the Fraternal year, I encourage each of you to carry forward the momentum we have built together. There are many opportunities for us to further our mission and serve others, and I am confident that, united in purpose, we will achieve even greater things. Let us recommit

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As Scrooge is visited by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, he is given a chance to reflect on his life and the impact of his actions on others. The Ghost of Christmas Past takes him on a journey through his own memories, highlighting moments of lost innocence and opportunities for happiness that he squandered. This ghost symbolizes the importance of self-reflection and the need to reconcile with one's past.



This sets the stage for his transformation. Marley's ghost, bound in chains, represents the consequences of a life devoid of charity and kindness. This image of purgatory serves as a reminder of the importance of self-reflection and the need to reconcile with one's past.

The Ghost of Christmas Present introduces Scrooge to the joys and hardships of those around him, emphasizing the values of empathy and generosity. Through this ghost, Scrooge witnesses the Cratchit family's humble but joyful Christmas celebration, despite their poverty. The character of Tiny Tim, with his unwavering faith and optimism, serves as a poignant reminder of the power of love and the importance of caring for the less fortunate.

Finally, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come presents Scrooge with a grim vision of his own death and the legacy of indifference he will leave behind if he does not change. This ghost embodies the concept of judgment and the fear of damnation, compelling Scrooge to confront the consequences of his actions and the urgency of redemption.

In the end, Scrooge's transformation is a testament to the power of redemption and the possibility of change. By embracing the values of charity, compassion, and community, he is able to find salvation and a renewed sense of purpose. The celebration of Christmas as a Christian holy day underscores the novella's message of hope and renewal, reminding readers of the enduring significance of these themes.



"A Christmas Carol" remains a timeless story that resonates with readers of all backgrounds, offering a powerful reminder of the importance of kindness, generosity, and the potential for personal transformation. Through its rich religious allegories and moral lessons,

Dickens' novella continues to inspire and uplift, making it a cherished classic for generations to come.

ourselves to our values and continue to work hard—side by side—for the good of our council, community, and the Order.

Thank you once again for all that you do. Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and successful New Year!

Robert J. Barnard

District Deputy 10

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Monastery Sale A Great Success

The recent Monastery Sale organized by Council 13440 has been hailed as one of the most successful events of the year. The event, which took place over three weekends, saw an overwhelming response from the Parish community, with almost all goods sold out even before the Life Teen mass began.

One of the highlights of the sale was the "Keep Christ In Christmas" cards, which were a tremendous success. The monk-made fudge was so popular that it had to be reordered three times, and each batch sold out quickly, much to the delight of the attendees. The deliciousness of the fudge was evident, as many could attest to its irresistible taste.

As always, the biscotti was a crowd favorite and sold out entirely. Monk Table Coffee and local honey were also big hits, continuing their tradition of being popular items at the sale.

The success of the event can be attributed to the excellent organization and oversight by Chair Robert Barnard. The community's support and enthusiasm played a significant role in making the Monastery Sale a memorable and prosperous event. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all who assisted in this project.



Wreaths Across America is committed to teaching all generations about the value of their freedoms, and the importance of honoring those who sacrificed so much to protect those freedoms. In 2022, the organization launched its expanded TEACH program and collaboration with like-minded organizations focused on character development and service projects for young people of all ages, with lesson plans for all grade levels and learning abilities.

Wreaths Across America would not be successful without the help of volunteers, active organizations and the generosity of the trucking industry, which offer invaluable support to WAA's mission to remember the men and women who served our country, honor our military and their families, and teach our children about our freedom and those who protect it.





This year, as many past years our 4th Degree Assembly met on Saturday, December 14th to place wreaths at the graves of our fallen military brothers in Lawrenceville. Assisting the assembly were:

Carey Scruggs - 13440
Alan Larkins - 13052
Mark Winsor - 13052
Charlie Busch - 13052
Tony Annarelli - 13052

Rob Barnard - 13440
Jimmy Koroma - 13052
Steve Jahns - 13052
Tom Seabrook - 1305
Jose Martinez - 13052



A Season of Faith, Hope, and Charity

Christmas is almost here, and it's a time that brings joy and warmth to our hearts. For many children, the holiday is all about Santa Claus, Christmas trees, and gifts. But there's a deeper meaning to this special time of year. I found a wonderful movie, *The Nativity Story*, that beautifully tells the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of Christ. Over the years, I've had my grandchildren watch it. Whether it resonated and stayed with them or not, I can't say for sure. But I hope that as they grow older, they'll remember it and share it with their own children.

While we love to show our affection for our loved ones with



thoughtful gifts, starting the day by attending Mass together before opening presents and enjoying our family dinner traditions can remind us all of the true meaning of the season.

As we gather to celebrate the birth of Christ, let's reflect on the true meaning of Christmas—a time of renewed faith, restored hope, and shared charity. The Knights of Columbus Council 13440 has always been a beacon of service and fraternity, and this season reminds us why we joined the Knights in the first place—to live out these virtues in our daily lives.

Christmas is not only a celebration of God's greatest gift to humanity but also an invitation for us to give generously of ourselves. Whether it's supporting parish activities, helping families in need, or simply showing kindness to those around us, every act of charity reflects the love of Christ.

Let's also remember the importance of unity. In a world that often feels divided, our brotherhood stands as a testament to what can be achieved when faith guides our actions. May this Christmas inspire us to strengthen our bonds, deepen our spiritual lives, and continue our mission of service.

So put down the cell phones, shut off the T.V., put away the tablets and meditate on the gift of our Savior to the world.

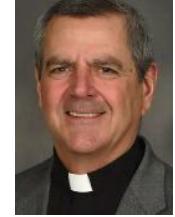
From all of us in the Knights of Columbus, we wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas and a joyful New Year.



May peace and goodwill fill your hearts today and always.

Listening with Humility

I want to begin this reflection by admitting that I need to work on listening with humility, just as I'm sure some of you do as well. Recently, I attended a retreat at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, and this was the topic of the retreat. What follows is a blend of what I learned there, along with my own interpretation and personal reflections after days of prayer.



So, what is listening with humility?

It's an important question, one that requires time in silent prayer. Humility isn't sinlessness, modesty, or blind obedience. Take King David, for example: he was a murderer, an adulterer, and a king who conquered many lands. Yet, he was observant and listened to the Lord with humility and obedience. David also repented for his sins against the Lord, and the Lord forgave his sins, just as He forgives us when we come to Him in humility to confess our sins.

"Then King David went in and sat before the LORD..."



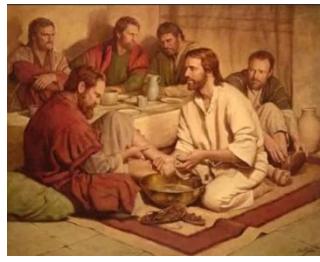
We, my brothers in Christ, need to listen more than we talk. This includes listening to someone we may disagree with, without planning a comeback before they finish speaking.

Here's an exercise to consider: Pair two individuals who hold opposite views on a topic (let's avoid politics—it could get messy). Choose something lighter, like who the best college football coach is. Each person gives a short explanation of why their chosen coach is the best. Then, the other person must relay those reasons back to the group with the same passion and spirit of delivery. Not that you must agree with the points of view, but you must reflect the spirit of the delivery. I suspect most of us would struggle to do this well. Why? Because we often block out points of view we disagree with, even when we are face-to-face with the person sharing them.

Listening with humility begins by removing the barriers we already have in our minds about a subject or opinion. It's also about listening to what is **not** said. Reading someone's body language is part of listening, and sometimes a challenge for us, even with our wives. It's often the words not said that carry the most weight.

We are all created in the image and likeness of God, and in our own unique ways, reflect His love in what we say and do. Yet do we truly see Him in others? It can be a challenging and humbling experience to see His presence in individuals we disagree with. Humility is not blindness, its openness and having the grace to listen with open ears and hearts to everyone we encounter.

Jesus is the greatest example of humility we have. He listened to all His Father told Him—obedient for sure, but humble in His example to all that He was asked to do to save a wretched people. He humbled Himself to save us all. For me this is modeled in the washing of His disciples' feet at the Last Supper, and He finishes by saying, "I have given you a model to follow... no slave is greater than his master..." (Jn 13:15,16).



I challenge you to read Philippians chapter 2: *The Plea for Unity and Humility*. A favorite verse of mine from chapter 2 is, "**Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourself.**" (Phil 2:3)

As we begin the Christmas season and a new year, let us challenge ourselves to **listen with humility**, and to open our minds and hearts to those we encounter along the way. Let us also see past the façade of the person standing in front of us and open our hearts to encounter Christ who dwells in them. Through this lens, we will see life and love in the people we meet, opening our own hearts to a life in the Spirit that will guide us to reconciliation and peace.

May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all and our families today and always.

Deacon Mike

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord
"The Word became Flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have seen



His glory: The glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love." (John 1:14)

The actual date of Christ's birth is unknown. The Gospels do not record it and there is not any early tradition to identify it. Scholars identify the approximate year as sometime between 8 - 5 BC and the season as probably early spring. The feast day was placed where it was, in all likelihood, to supplant the practice of the winter solstice festival among pagan converts by pointing to Christ as the true light who comes into the world. The Western Church emphasizes the celebration of the Nativity or Birth of Jesus on December 25, while the Eastern Church celebrates His manifestation to the Magi on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6.

The word Christmas was derived from the Old English Cristes Maesse or "Mass of Christmas." Over the centuries it has become a comprehensive word including both the religious traditions and the secular traditions.

In North America, the early immigrants brought their different Christmas traditions. The Germans brought the Christmas tree, the Irish contributed the lights in windows of homes, Catholic immigrants brought Midnight Mass, and everyone had their own Christmas carols.

The Lights of Christmas

The most obvious symbol of Christmas are lights – Christmas candles, window lights, luminaries, lights on the Advent Wreath and Christmas tree. All signifying that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.



The Christmas candle is an ancient tradition. It is usually placed in the center of the Advent Wreath to complete the removal of darkness and sin by the Coming of Christ.

Window Lights

Lights placed inside windowsills depict a beacon to light the way for Mary, Joseph, and the coming of the Christ Child.



Christmas Tree



Christmas trees can be found almost anywhere, any size. For many people, the Christmas tree is only a seasonal decoration. To Christians it symbolizes the green of hope at a time of dying, the burning light of Christ at a time of spiritual darkness and the fruits of paradise. Its origin as a Christian symbol may trace to an historical event. When St. Boniface evangelized the Germanic tribes he chopped down their sacred oak to prove the impotence of their god. Just as Patrick used the shamrock as a symbol of the

Trinity, Boniface used the evergreen as a symbol of the eternity of the true God. The Church provides a blessing ceremony in its Book of Blessings for use in the absence of a priest.



The appearance of holly is representative of the burning bush of Moses and Mary's burning love of for God. The red berries and prickly points are symbolic of the crown of thorns and the bloody death that the Christ Child would eventually suffer.

Poinsettia

Poinsettias are associated with Christmas as the lily is with Easter. In Mexico it blooms at Christmas time and is called the "Flower of the Holy Night." Its name is from the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Dr. Joel Poinsett. ([From EWTN](#))



Goal for 2026: Introduce Someone to the Truths of the Catholic Church

It's a lofty goal, for sure. But in 2026 ask God to help you introduce someone to the teachings of the Catholic Church. We'll even give you the tools to do it (more on that below)

The challenge to you: How can I join or help someone join the Catholic Church?

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming Catholic, you or he should seek out a nearby Catholic parish and inquire about its OCIA program. OCIA stands for the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults and has always been present, in some form, since the beginning of the Church. Acts 8:26-40 describes how the apostle Philip taught a servant of the Ethiopian queen about Jesus before he baptized him. In the second century, Justin Martyr described the process of being received into the Church this way:

As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated.

In the twentieth century, the Second Vatican Council ushered in a period of renewal and standardization for the process of receiving converts into the Church. These prospective converts are called catechumens, which means "ones being instructed." They receive catechesis, or the "teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life" (CCC 5). In the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the council decreed the following:

The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be taken into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this means the time of the catechumenate,

which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time (64).

In 1972, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship fulfilled this exhortation and released a new rite for Christian initiation that is now known as RCIA. In 2021 The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops changed that to the OCIA. The rite is meant for adults, as well as children who have attained the age of reason, who seek to be full members of Christ's Church. OCIA is not mandatory; priests can determine if an alternative kind of formation would be more beneficial for a catechumen. Those who are encouraged to enter OCIA, however, will normally follow this process:

Evangelization and Pre-Catechumenate

Also known as the period of inquiry, this time allows prospective converts to learn about the Catholic faith and hear the good news of the gospel.

The Order of Catechumens

An inquirer who wishes to become Catholic enters the order of catechumens. In order to do this, he is required to select a sponsor, who will guide him through the process of becoming Catholic and be present when he receives the sacraments of initiation. After selecting a sponsor, the catechumen is welcomed into the community at Mass through the rite of acceptance or the rite of welcoming, depending on whether he has already been baptized. During this rite, the candidate stands before the assembly and states his desire both to be instructed in the Faith and to receive "a fuller sharing in the life of the Church." By formally and publicly expressing their desire to become Catholic, catechumens are joined to the Body of Christ's faithful, even if not yet in a complete way. This is evident in the fact that catechumens have a right to Christian burial even if they die before baptism (CIC 1183).

Catechesis and Purification

During this stage of the conversion process, the candidate is formally taught the doctrines of the Faith and instructed in how to live a holy, Christian life. This period culminates in the rite of election, in which the Church formally ratifies a candidate's desire to become Catholic. After this rite, the candidate engages in prayer and rites at Lenten Masses called "scrutinies" that prepare him for the reception of the sacraments.

The Sacraments of Initiation

The OCIA process reaches its climax at the Easter Vigil, during which non-Christian catechumens receive baptism, confirmation, and first Eucharist, and catechumens from other Christian denominations with valid baptisms receive confirmation and first Eucharist. It is a joyous occasion that celebrates how God has brought his children into full communion with Christ's "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church."

Upcoming Events:

January 8 Men of the Word

JP II Center, 7pm

January 10 Disabilities Drive (Tootsie Roll Drive)
Location To Be Determined, 9am – 1pm

January 12 Planning Meeting

January 19 Rosary/Business Meeting
Sanctuary/Kane-Beltran Center

January 22 Men of the Word
JP II Center, 7pm



Comical Closures

Judge: "What are you charged with?"

Prisoner: "Doing my Christmas shopping early."

Judge: "That's not an offense. How early were you doing this shopping?"

Prisoner: "Before the store opened."

A Sign of the Times

A little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The Child stared at him open mouthed and horrifies for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"

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THE VIRGIN BIRTH

A woman takes her 16-year-old daughter to the doctor. The doctor says, "Okay, Mrs. Jones, what's the problem?" The mother says, "It's my daughter Darla. She keeps getting these cravings, she's putting on weight and is sick most mornings."

The doctor gives Darla a good examination then turns to the mother and says, "Well, I don't know how to tell you this but your Darla is pregnant. About 4 months would be my guess." The mother says, "Pregnant?! She can't be, she has never ever been left alone with a man! Have you Darla?" Darla says, "No mother! I've never even kissed a man!" The doctor walked over to the window and just stares out it. About five minutes pass and finally the mother says, "Is there something wrong out there doctor?"

The doctor replies, "No, not really, it's just that the last time anything like this happened, a star appeared in the east, and three wise men came over the hill. I'll be damned if I'm going to miss it this time!"

SEVERAL PAGES OF PERTINENT CARTOONS FOLLOW





Thanks to Dad Hengeveld (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-20-2001

SORRY FOLKS, WE'RE BOOKED SOLID ... GOD HIMSELF COULDN'T GET A ROOM HERE TONIGHT



12-23-1997

I WAS SO EXCITED ABOUT THE BABY JESUS
 THAT I STARTED CLUCKING LIKE A FIEND
 ... AND THEN AN ANGEL OF THE LORD
 APPEARED BEFORE ME AND SAID UNTO ME
 ... "SHUT UP"

From The Officers Of St. Oliver Council 13440 To All The Brothers and Families Of Our Council

May the joy of the Nativity fill your hearts with gladness and may the peace of Christ be with you and your loved ones throughout this holy season and into the New Year. Let us continue to support one another in faith and fellowship, united in our mission to serve God and our communities. Wishing you all a blessed and Merry Christmas!

