

Knights of Columbus  
Father Albert Newman  
Council 8470



September 2008  
Newsletter

With 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in force this month, I thought I would give a history on our founder, Blessed Michael J. McGivney and the man our council is named after, Fr. Albert J. Newman.

Our Founder: Father Michael J. McGivney



Over the course of its history, the Knights of Columbus has been an unstoppable force for good in the Church and society. Learn how a handful of immigrant Catholic men, led by one visionary priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, seized the spirit of their times to found an organization whose appeal is timeless because its goals are for all eternity.

At each crossroads, each hamlet, each farm town it passed on its way south through Nebraska, the festive campaign train was met by curious onlookers straining for a glimpse of the man who hoped to be the next president of the United States.

They sat in their Model Ts as it sped past them into the next cornfield. They waved from station platforms when it stopped long enough for Al Smith to step out and doff his signature brown derby.

In Fairbury, 800 of them cheered as a band struck up “The Sidewalks of New York,” a song about a place few of them had ever seen. A local banker welcomed the governor from the East, predicting a “tidal wave” of votes six weeks hence.

Kansas, reliably Republican Kansas, greeted the Democratic nominee with even bigger crowds as the train sped south through the sun-baked afternoon: more than 1,000 at Belleville and Clay Center, 4,000 at Manhattan. At nightfall the train reached Topeka, home of the vice-presidential nominee on the opposing ticket. Spectators climbed the sides of the campaign car and Governor Smith walked back and forth across the platform in the ghostly light of white flares, swinging his derby and shaking every hand he could reach.

On days like this, it was easy to believe that he might actually win. The voters of a largely Protestant nation might set aside fear and prejudice and elect a Catholic to lead them.

The train left Topeka and sped through the night toward Oklahoma. There, Smith was scheduled to deliver a major speech meant to show the farmers of the nation’s vast midsection that a man from the teeming streets of the Lower East Side of Manhattan could understand their problems.

It was in the last hours before dawn, after the train had crossed the state line and Smith was asleep, that some of the passengers looked out the windows and noticed a light in the distance — a cross burning in a field, a poisonous welcome from a group that was particularly active in Oklahoma, the Ku Klux Klan.

More than 10,000 people packed the Oklahoma City Coliseum that evening. They heard a fiery Al Smith speak a truth he had previously left mostly unspoken — that he was running against not just Herbert Hoover, but against a “whispering campaign” of “bigotry, hatred, intolerance and un-American sectarian division.”

“I here and now drag them into the open and I denounce them as a treasonable attack upon the very foundations of American liberty,” he said about the Klan, which had attacked not just him, but the entire Catholic Church, as well as an organization to which he proudly belonged: the Knights of Columbus (Dr. John C. Coyle Council 163).

“Nothing could be so contradictory to our whole history,” Smith argued. “Nothing could be so false to the teachings of our divine Lord himself. The world knows no greater mockery than the use of the blazing cross, the cross upon which Christ died, as a symbol to instill into the hearts of men a hatred of their brethren while Christ preached and died for the love and brotherhood of man.”

He spoke without notes, his public voice unleashed, rising to a pitch that matched his private outrage. “Let me make myself perfectly clear: I do not want any Catholic in the United States of America to vote for me on the sixth of November because I am a Catholic,” he said to a wave of applause. “By the same token, I cannot refrain from saying that any person who votes against me simply because of my religion is not a real, pure, genuine American.”

The Coliseum filled with more applause, and it radiated out from Oklahoma City, taken up by American Catholics who were tired of having their patriotism questioned. "Win or lose, I think Smith's campaign has done much for Catholicity by dragging 'Old Man Intolerance' out into the broad daylight where the public can have a good look at him," wrote Luke Hart, who, as the Order's supreme advocate, had been fighting his own battles in the same long war against anti-Catholic bias.

Hart was less certain, though, about Smith's prospects in the election, in which the Knights remained officially neutral. "Much as I would love to see it, I cannot convince myself that he has a chance," he wrote.

He was right. Smith won the big cities, with their large populations of immigrant Catholics, but got barely 40 percent of the total vote, losing even his own home state of New York. America in 1928, it seemed, just wasn't ready for a Catholic president.

During the Civil War, many of the nation's native Protestants had the same question about the tide of immigrant Catholics, overwhelmingly Irish, that had been surging across the Atlantic: Just how American — how real, pure, genuine American — were they?

Some New Haven men thought they had answered that once and for all by joining the Union Army and serving alongside scores of thousands of other Irish immigrants. So deep was the bond they formed among themselves while fighting for their new nation that they stuck together after they returned home. Their regular meetings evolved into a fraternal group that took its name, the Red Knights, from the color of the blankets they had carried in their knapsacks.

And when a young curate at St. Mary's got the idea to start a Catholic fraternal organization, he borrowed many of his ideas about its form and purpose, as well as most of its first leaders, from this local group of patriotic Catholics.

Father Michael J. McGivney was himself the son of immigrants. Like many other first- and second-generation Americans, he was concerned about what role the faith his family had brought from the Old World would have in a new world that often regarded it with suspicion, even scorn.

The Church provided spiritual sustenance to be sure, but what practical value might it additionally offer? How might it keep men from drifting away from the faith and into the competing rituals of the secret societies that were so popular? How might it help the families left behind, as his own had been, when fathers died too young, felled by hard jobs and heart-straining worries at the bottom of the economic ladder? How might it help Catholics become better Catholics at the same time that they became better Americans?

How to be Catholic in America — that was the theme which inspired and animated the organization that Father McGivney founded in the basement of St. Mary's Church 125 years ago.

It was embodied in the name chosen by the 75 men at the first official meeting on a snowy February evening in New Haven. By calling themselves the "Knights of Columbus," they were indelibly linking their church and their country, staking their own claim to the New World.

By invoking the name of the Italian explorer, they underlined a simple, stark, unassailable fact — that this predominantly Protestant nation might openly discriminate against Catholic immigrants and impugn their loyalty, might scurrilously defame the Church and the pope, might do everything it could to make Catholics feel unwelcome here, but it was in fact a nation that celebrated as its discoverer a Catholic.

And the Catholic descendants of Columbus, one charter member said, "were entitled to all rights and privileges due to such a discovery by one of our faith."

By 1885, the Order had paid its first death benefit and accumulated enough members for a thousand Knights to parade through downtown New Haven, led by a carriage carrying Father McGivney. "The parade is a credit to the Irish race," the former governor of Connecticut said as the marchers passed.

The Hartford Telegram agreed: "There are some narrow minded people living in New England yet who imagine that the Irish race are idle, slovenly and often vicious," an editorial declared, but the parade proved that "the second generation in this country are intensely American in their instincts, and they are forging ahead to prominent positions in commerce, trade and in the professions."

By the mid-1890s, the Order was spreading beyond Connecticut, and fighting back hard as the Nativist movement gained strength during a four-year economic depression.

"With true American patriotism," wrote Thomas Cummings, editor of *The Columbiad* and the Order's national organizer, "they demand from their members respect for manhood and liberty for the individual, particularly that liberty which is the essence of all liberty and which was first planted on this continent by Roman Catholics, viz: Freedom to worship God according to one's conscience."

When America went to war against Spain in 1898, the Catholic Church opposed it, but the Knights did what it regarded as its national duty and supported the war.

"[A]t the declaration of war all personal opinions as to the wisdom of such a course were forgotten" one state deputy reported, "and the Catholic people, imbued with the teachings of our Holy Church, to be always ready to sacrifice everything for our Faith and Country, offered themselves by the hundreds to fight and, if need be, to die in defense of our Country's cause."

Some of the more traditionally minded bishops had initially been skeptical of the Order — believing that it leaned too close to America, and too far from Rome — but by 1905, there were councils in every state, and most of the clerical opposition had melted away.

And the Knights had spread beyond America by then as well, into most of Canada, all the way across the Pacific into the Philippines, and into Mexico, a presence that would take on particular importance after the revolution there, when the Catholic Church was often under attack by the government, and the Order was a powerful force of resistance.

The Knights of Columbus was part of the great Progressive debates of the era, pressing for the kinds of governmental reforms that were in tune with Catholic social teachings. And in June 1912, 20,000 of them came to Washington to mark their biggest public triumph yet, the dedication of a potent symbol of how far they, and their religion, had advanced: the Columbus Memorial near the Capitol.

In attendance was the whole official apparatus of the nation: President Taft, Supreme Court justices, Congress. The parade of Knights, Supreme Knight James A. Flaherty declared, represented "the flower and chivalry of Catholic manhood," a spectacle that "would thrill and gladden the heart of any Christian man."

Not the hearts of their enemies, though, the number of which grew again as anti-Catholicism swelled in the years before the First World War, a reaction to the great wave of immigration.

The Knights fought back with lecture tours, libel suits, even a Commission on Racial Prejudices. In one court case, a judge turned to a panel of Masons, who, investigating the Knights, declared that it "teaches a high and noble patriotism, instills a love of country, inculcates a reverence for law and order."

When the U.S. entered the war in 1917, the Order entered, too, with the same patriotic fervor as those Red Knights from New Haven. By the time it ended, the K of C emblem on the khaki-uniformed arms of the secretaries at the Order's network of recreation centers, clubs and welcome huts had evolved into a fond nickname: Casey.

"Everybody Welcome, Everything Free" was the motto of the Knights' war effort, and it earned such goodwill that new members poured into the councils back home, more than 400,000 new Knights by 1923.

"God has so guided us that today we stand more powerful than ever and with ever-increasing power," wrote Supreme Knight Flaherty, "acknowledged throughout the world as a force for good."

The Order published the work of W.E.B. DuBois, America's most prominent black intellectual, as part of its Racial Contribution series, which was designed to upend what it called "the theory that the bulk of the nation are 'hyphenates' who are not, and never can be, true to the United States."

It urged the American government to take a tougher stand against a Mexican regime that was brutalizing Catholics. It successfully fought every outbreak of the compulsory education movement, a series of ballot measures, proposed laws and court cases aimed at requiring all children to attend public schools — what Flaherty called "a national movement to abolish the parochial school."

And it claimed as its most famous member Babe Ruth, who joined Pere Marquette Council 271 in South Boston when he was still playing for the Red Sox.

On a summer afternoon in 1920, before the first pitch of a game between the New York Yankees and the Detroit Tigers, a cluster of Knights gathered at home plate at the Polo Grounds to present him with a diamond-studded watch fob in the shape of the K of C emblem. He hit his 25th home run in the fifth inning, into the upper tier of the right field stands, one of the previously unimaginable 54 he would hit that year.

And then Al Smith lost, and the Knights learned just how much more work they still had to do.

In 1960, the Democrats nominated another Catholic as their candidate for president: John F. Kennedy, a member of Bunker Hill Council 62 in Charlestown, Mass., and a Fourth Degree Knight. Hart was by then the supreme knight of an organization that had grown so much in stature and influence that its 75th anniversary in 1957 had been marked by a cover story in Life magazine.

Hart believed that Kennedy's election "would do more to eliminate bigotry in this country than anything else that ever happened."

Anti-Catholicism wore different masks than it did during Al Smith's campaign, but Kennedy had his own Oklahoma City moment. His was in Houston, in a speech to a group of Protestant ministers. "I am not the Catholic candidate for president," he told them. "I am the Democratic Party's candidate for president who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church, and the Church does not speak for me," he said.

He railed, too, as Smith had, about religious prejudice, and he outlined his belief in an America "that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jewish...and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all."

But Kennedy won, and when Luke Hart visited the White House, the president greeted him by saying, "Hello, Chief" — a moment that showed just how far upward the Knights had helped to redefine the boundaries of what it meant to be both a Catholic and a real, pure, genuine American.

by Kevin Coyne

#### About the Author

Kevin Coyne is a professor of journalism at Columbia University and a columnist for the New Jersey edition of the Sunday New York Times. Coyne is working on a new history of the Knights of Columbus.

He is also the author of numerous magazine articles and books including *Domers: A Year at Notre Dame* (Penguin, 1996) and *Marching Home: To War and Back with the Men of One American Town* (Viking Penguin, 2003).

## **Who was Father Albert Newman?**

Father Albert Newman was born in New Orleans, LA, USA, in 1870. Father Newman moved to Almonte, Ontario with his mother after his father died when he was six years old. In Almonte, his uncle, Father O'Malley, was pastor of the Catholic Church, and Father Newman attended the local school before going to Ottawa University for his Philosophic studies. In 1893, he went to the Grand Seminary in Montreal and was ordained in Ottawa by Archbishop Duhamel for the Ottawa Diocese.

He served in Metcalf, ON and Ottawa before coming to Calgary on July 31, 1914. Before his appointment to Calgary, Bishop McNally had been pastor of Almonte and had undoubtedly known Father Newman and persuaded him to come to the new Diocese.

He was at the Cathedral until 1923 and apparently as Rector. He then was Chaplain at Lacombe Home until 1950. He broke his hip and spend the next five years at the Holy Cross Hospital and at the Banff Springs Hospital, totally blind for the last couple of years of his life. He died in Banff on February 21, 1955 and is buried in Calgary. He was a relative of Cardinal Newman.

## Meditation: Romans 13:8-10

**Romans 13:8-10:** <sup>8</sup>Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. <sup>10</sup>Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Have you ever noticed how the commandments that we hear most often are the ones we have the hardest time fulfilling? Take today's second reading as an example. We all have to deal with people who try our patience or rub us the wrong way. And then there's the pull of the world, urging us toward a self-centered approach to life. And all the time, we hear in the back of our minds Jesus telling us to love one another, even to prefer one another to ourselves.

This is a demanding call! Like Jesus, we should seek to serve instead of being served (Matthew 20:28). He asks us to take the "lowest place" at the banquet (Luke 14:9). He even warns us that if we strive to be first, we will be last, but if we strive to be last, we will be first (Matthew 20:16).

In this reading, God is inviting us to do a little self-examination. How have you done lately in loving your neighbor as yourself? Have you said hurtful things about another person? Have you failed to defend a friend because you were afraid of criticism from others? Have you judged someone unfairly? Have you used someone for selfish purposes? Or have you neglected to help a friend who needed you because it was inconvenient?

These are uncomfortable questions to ask, to be sure. But don't forget that God knows your heart. He knows how much you want to do good, even though you fail at times. He also knows that he has placed his Spirit in you to give you divine strength and to make changes that seem impossible. So don't be afraid to open up to him and ask him to help you. Remember: God is love. And that love is generous and overflowing. Let him love you, and you'll find yourself loving other people more and more.

*"Heavenly Father, forgive me for putting myself first. By your Spirit, teach me how to love. Father, unite all your children as one!"*

## Catholic Jokes

A little boy was listening to a long and excessively boring sermon in church. Suddenly his eye the red sanctuary lamp caught his eye. Tugging his father's sleeve, he said, "Daddy, when the light turns green can we go?"

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A priest and a bus driver both died and went to Heaven at the same time. They get to the pearly gates where Pope St. Peter greets them. He motions to the priest, and they both hop in a jeep and go out the back door. There are about 50 acres of rolling hills with a little cottage on the knoll.

St. Peter turns to the priest and says "This will be yours for eternity. A perfect little cottage, right next to lovely pond, a lush little garden, and a library full of books."

The priest says, "Thank you so much. This I shall enjoy!" St. Peter drops off the priest, goes back to the pearly gates and motions to the bus driver.

They hop in a stretch limo and go out the front door. There are about 500 acres of land, with mountains and lakes and rivers. There is a huge 200-room castle on one of the mountains, and a wishing well that makes wishes come true. St. Peter says "This will be yours for eternity. You can live in that castle with servants to wait on you hand and foot, and you can have everything you want."

The bus driver looks and St. Peter and says "Well, now, don't think I'm not grateful, but why am I getting so much more than the priest?"

St. Peter just laughs and says "You brought more souls to Heaven! When the priest preached, everyone fell asleep. When you drove your bus, people prayed!"

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Two Jesuit novices both wanted a cigarette while they prayed. They decided to ask their superior for permission. The first asked but was told no. A little while later he spotted his friend smoking and praying. "Why did the superior allow you to smoke and not me?" he asked. His friend replied, "Because you asked if you could smoke while you prayed, and I asked if I could pray while I smoked!"



### Council 8470 Scheduled Events Calendar for the Columbian Year 2008 – 2009

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Parish 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Supper	Sept. 6, 2008
Bishop Henry Outdoor Mass (FLC)	Sept. 14, 2008
St. Patrick's Stewardship Weekend	Sept 20 – 21, 2008
KofC 8470/8471 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner	Sept. 27, 2008
Pancake Breakfast / Membership Drive / Scholarships	Oct. 19, 2008
Council Bowling Outing	Oct. 26, 2008
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree – St. Albert the Great	Oct. 21, 2008
Major Degree (location TBA)	Nov. 1, 2008
K of C Memorial Mass (St. Cecilia's)	Nov. (TBA)
OctoberFest Dance	Nov. 15, 2008
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree – St. Albert the Great	Nov. 18, 2008
Pancake Breakfast	Dec. 7, 2008
Semi-annual District Deputies meeting	Jan. 17 – 18, 2009
St. Patrick's Winter Carnival	Jan. 11, 2009
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree – St. Albert the Great	Jan 20, 2009
Pancake Breakfast	Jan. 25, 2009
St. Patrick's Valentine Dinner/Dance	Feb. 14, 2009
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree – St. Albert the Great	Feb. 17, 2009
Council Retreat (Cochrane)	Feb. 28, 2009
FLC Legacy Dinner (Fr. Lacombe Center)	Mar. 13, 2009
Pancake Breakfast/Membership drive	Mar. 15, 2009
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree – St. Albert the Great	Mar. 17, 2009
Day of the Unborn – Mass with evening prayer at Patrick's	Mar. 25, 2009
Founders Day	Mar. 29, 2009
Annual K. of C. Convention (red Deer)	April 24/25/26, 2009
Pancake Breakfast	May 03, 2009
Council election nominations for new executive	May 12, 2009
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree – St. Albert the Great	May 19, 2009
Spaghetti Dinner – Karaoke night	May 23, 2009
Council Elections for new executive	June 09, 2009
Annual K. of C. Garage Sale	June 13, 2009
K. of C. Stampede Breakfast	July 05, 2009